

# Public Document Pack

**Mid Devon District Council**

## **Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday, 16 August 2021 at 2.15 pm**  
**Exe Room, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Monday, 13 September 2021 at 2.15 pm**

**PLEASE NOTE:** this meeting will take place at Phoenix House, but members of the Public and Press can and should attend via Zoom only. Please do not attend Phoenix House without prior agreement. The attached Protocol for Hybrid Meetings explains how this will work.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91227848971?pwd=N3lNaCs5eTNkeksyTElrbzdOcHdlZz09>

Meeting ID: 912 2784 8971

Passcode: 989472

One tap mobile

08003582817,,91227848971#,,, \*989472# The United Kingdom Toll-free

08000315717,,91227848971#,,, \*989472# The United Kingdom Toll-free

Dial by your location

0 800 358 2817 The United Kingdom Toll-free

0 800 031 5717 The United Kingdom Toll-free

0 800 260 5801 The United Kingdom Toll-free

Meeting ID: 912 2784 8971

Passcode: 989472

## **Membership**

Cllr B G J Warren

Cllr G Barnell

Cllr E J Berry

Cllr Mrs F J Colthorpe

Cllr L J Cruwys

Cllr Mrs S Griggs

Cllr P J Heal

Cllr F W Letch

Cllr S Pugh

Cllr R F Radford

Cllr Ms E J Wainwright

Cllr A Wilce

# AGENDA

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **Apologies and Substitute Members**  
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).
- 2      **Hybrid Meetings Protocol (Pages 5 - 12)**  
Members are asked to note the Hybrid Meetings Protocol.
- 3      **Declarations of interest under the code of conduct**  
Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest, and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest.
- 4      **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.  
  
Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.
- 5      **Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 13 - 18)**  
Members to consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.  
  
The Committee is reminded that only those members of the Committee present at the previous meeting should vote and, in doing so, should be influenced only by seeking to ensure that the minutes are an accurate record.
- 6      **Decisions of the Cabinet**  
To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting that have been called-in.
- 7      **Chairmans announcements**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee may wish to make.
- 8      **Housing Strategy Consultation Draft (Pages 19 - 86)**  
To consider the draft strategy previously presented to Homes PDG on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The Homes PDG at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021:

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the draft Housing Strategy 2021 – 2025, attached at annex 1, be approved for external and public consultation.

- 9      **Menopause Working Group update** (*Pages 87 - 102*)  
To receive an update on the recommendations of the Menopause Working Group from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste.
- 10     **Establishment 6 month update** (*Pages 103 - 112*)  
To receive an update report from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste on the Establishment.
- 11     **Forward Plan** (*Pages 113 - 118*)  
Members are asked to consider any items within the Forward Plan that they may wish to bring forward for discussion at the next meeting.
- 12     **Scrutiny Officer update**  
To receive an update from the Scrutiny Officer.
- 13     **Work Plan** (*Pages 119 - 128*)  
Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.

Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan.

**Stephen Walford**  
Chief Executive  
Friday, 6 August 2021

### Covid-19 and meetings

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. However, the Council is also required to follow government guidance about safety during the pandemic. For a short period – probably until 30 June – the Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Zoom.

You are strongly encouraged to participate via Zoom to keep everyone safe - there is limited capacity in meeting rooms if safety requirements are to be met. There are restrictions and conditions which apply to those in the building and the use of the building. You must not attend a meeting at Phoenix House without complying with the requirements in the new protocol for meetings. You must follow any directions you are given.

Please read the new meeting protocol which is available here: <https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/documents/s21866/aaaaHybridMeetingProtocolMay2021.pdf>

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed – as you can imagine, it is easier to see and manage public speaking when everyone is physically present in the same room. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Carole Oliphant on:

E-Mail: [coliphant@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:coliphant@middevon.gov.uk)

1.

## Mid Devon District Council – Hybrid Meeting Protocol

### 1. Introduction

Remote meetings via Zoom have been used during the Covid-19 pandemic in accordance with the temporary legislation. That legislation ceases to apply from 7 May 2021. However, Covid-19 legislation and guidance continues in place and this places specific requirements for meetings in relation to health and safety, risk assessments and related matters.

The Council has therefore put in place temporary arrangements which will enable meetings to take place in compliance with legislation, whilst providing alternative participation opportunities to maintain a Covid-19 safe environment. All are asked to remember that the Council's offices at Phoenix House are not just meeting rooms – they are the place of employment for many and there are implications beyond just how the meetings are held.

The arrangements set out in this Protocol will apply to meetings from 7 May 2021 to (and including) 30 June 2021, unless the Council decides to change, curtail or extend them. At the date of this Protocol, it is expected that arrangements may change later this year – because the Government may change the law, the Covid-19 pandemic may have further receded and/or the Council makes alternative arrangements.

### 2. Hybrid arrangements – how will they work?

The primary objective is to ensure that meetings can continue as safely as possible and that the rights of Members and the Public are not diminished simply because the meeting is being held through a mix of online and face-to-face means. The Chairman will retain control and discretion over the conduct of the meeting and the Zoom host will provide administrative support to facilitate the meeting.

Please note that, exceptionally, meeting arrangements may change – in response to legislation, court decisions, or risk. This may include a meeting being postponed, or the hybrid arrangements changing or being withdrawn. We ask that you check the arrangements in advance of joining or attending the meeting.

#### (a) Members (councillors) entitled to vote

All Members entitled to vote in a meeting must be present in the same room – if they are to be classed as 'present' (count towards the quorum) and to cast a vote. If a Member entitled to vote is not in the room, they may still participate via Zoom (see below), but they will not be present (quorum) nor be able to vote.

#### (b) Other Members, Officers and the Public

The Council will use Zoom to enable all other Members, officers and the Public to attend and participate in meetings safely. Zoom will be enabled in all public meetings. Those attending the meeting physically will be able to see and hear Zoom participants via the existing large TV/monitor screens in the meeting rooms.

Those on Zoom will be able to hear Members in the room and see them – although this will be a whole room view and there will be no zooming in on individual members. It is essential therefore those Members present in the room use the microphones at all times and identify themselves before speaking.

There will be some Officers in the room – the Committee Administrator, the Zoom host and, at times, an additional support officer. There may also be a meeting room host to manage the safety of the meeting. All other Officers should use Zoom, unless they are specifically invited into the room by the Chairman of the meeting.

### **3. Zoom**

Zoom is the system the Council will be using for those attending Hybrid meetings remotely. It has functionality for audio, video, and screen sharing and you do not need to be a member of the Council or have a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting.

### **4. Access to documents**

Member Services will publish the agenda and reports for committee meetings on the Council's website in line with usual practice. Paper copies of agendas will only be made available to those who have previously requested this and also the Chair of a meeting.

If any other Member wishes to have a paper copy, they must notify Member Services before the agenda is published, so they can arrange to post directly – it may take longer to organise printing, so as much notice as possible is appreciated.

The Public should continue to access agendas via the Council's website - and are encouraged to do so even after the offices at Phoenix House are open again.

### **5. Setting up the Meeting for Zoom attendance**

This will be done by Member Services. They will send a meeting request via Outlook which will appear in Members' Outlook calendar. Members and Officers will receive a URL link to click on to join the meeting. The Public will use the Zoom details on the front of the agenda. The telephone dial-in via Zoom will also be available.

### **6. Public Access and Participation**

#### **(a) Public Access:**

Members of the Public will be able to use a web link and standard internet browser. This will be displayed on the front of the agenda. Members of the Public should attend a meeting via Zoom, unless there are exceptional circumstances justifying attendance in person.

If any member of the Public still wishes to attend in person, they must notify Member Services **at least 3 working days before the meeting**. Notifications must be sent by email to:

[Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk)

| Day of meeting | Notice given by    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Monday         | Previous Wednesday |
| Tuesday        | Previous Thursday  |
| Wednesday      | Previous Friday    |
| Thursday       | Monday             |
| Friday         | Tuesday            |

The meeting risk assessment may need to be updated. Member Services will liaise with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the Chairman of the meeting. A decision will be taken on whether attendance in person can be safely accommodated.

(b) Public Participation (speaking):

Public questions will continue in line with the Council's current arrangements as far as is practicable. However, to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and that no member of the public is missed, all those who wish to speak must register **by 4pm on the day before the meeting**. They should email their full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk). If they wish to circulate their question in advance, that would be helpful.

At public question time, the Chair will ask each registered person to speak at the appropriate time. In the normal way, the public should state their full name, the agenda item they wish to speak to **before** they proceed with their question. Unless they have registered, a member of the public may not be called to speak, except at the discretion of the Chairman.

If a member of the public wishes to ask a question but cannot attend the meeting for whatever reason, there is nothing to prevent them from emailing members of the Committee with their question, views or concern in advance. However, if they do so, it would be helpful if a copy could be sent to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) as well.

## **7. Arrangements for any person attending meetings at Phoenix House**

Anyone attending a meeting in person must observe the following requirements:

- (a) For non-voting members, officers and the Public – are there exceptional circumstances to justify attending? If so, please notify in advance and in paragraph 6 above. It is essential that the Council knows who is attending and how many will be in the room, so that the meeting risk assessment can be updated.

- (b) Do not attend if you: have any symptoms of Covid-19; are self-isolating (with or without a positive Covid-19 test); or are in a period of post-travel quarantine.
- (c) Wear a mask at all times except when invited to speak by the Chairman of the meeting. If you have a medical exemption for wearing a mask, please attend via Zoom unless you are a Member who must attend to vote.
- (d) Use the hand sanitiser which is available in the building.
- (e) Follow the directions for entering, moving around and exiting the building. Follow the instructions of any Officer present to manage the safety of the meeting and/or the Chairman.
- (f) Sign into the meeting if requested to do so – you may be asked to leave contact details
- (g) Enter and leave the building promptly – do not gather inside after the meeting has finished, or during any break in the meeting
- (h) Bring your own water/refreshments, as these will not be available for the time being.
- (i) Maintain social distancing throughout – this is 2 metres apart, or 1 metre with additional safeguards (e.g. face masks).

## 8. Starting the Meeting

At the start of the meeting, the Member Services Officer will check all required attendees are present and that there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, the meeting will be adjourned. This applies if, during the meeting, it becomes inquorate for whatever reason.

The Chair will remind all Members, Officers and the Public attending via Zoom that **all microphones must be muted**, unless and until they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc. which is intrusive and disruptive during the meeting. The Hosting Officer will enforce this and will be able to turn off participant mics when they are not in use.

## 9. Declaration of Interests

Members should declare their interests in the usual way. A Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest is required to leave the room. If they are attending via Zoom, they will be moved to the waiting room for the duration of the item.

## 10. The Meeting and Debate

- (a) For Members and Officers physically present



Each member should raise their hand to indicate a request to speak. When called, they must identify themselves for the recording and for the benefit of those attending via Zoom. The microphone must be used when speaking – standing will make it difficult for those on Zoom to hear and is discouraged, including at meetings of Full Council.

(b) For any person attending via Zoom

The Council will not be using the Chat function. The Chairman will call speakers in accordance with the usual rules i.e. either at Public Question Time, or for Members and Officers, when they raise their Zoom hand to speak.

No decision or outcome will be invalidated by a failure of the Chair to call a member to speak – remote management of meetings is intensive and the Hybrid arrangements are likely to be more so. It is reasonable to expect that some requests will be inadvertently missed from time to time.

When referring to reports or making specific comments, Members and Officers should refer to the report and page number whenever possible. This will help all present or in attendance to have a clear understanding of what is being discussed.

## **11. Voting**

Voting for meetings in person is normally through a show of hands. The Member Services Officer will announce the numerical result of the vote for the benefit of those attending via Zoom.

## **12. Meeting Etiquette Reminder for Zoom attendees**

- Mute your microphone – you will still be able to hear what is being said.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly and please state your name each time you speak
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

## **13. Part 2 Reports and Debate**

There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or “exempt” issues – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – are under consideration.

If there are members of the public and press attending the meeting, then the Member Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, remove them to a waiting room for the duration of that item. They can then be invited back in when the business returns to Part 1.

Please turn off smart speakers such as Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Home or smart music devices. These could inadvertently record phone or video conversations, which would not be appropriate during the consideration of confidential items.

#### **14. Interpretation of standing orders**

Where the Chairman is required to interpret the Council's Constitution and procedural rules and how they apply to remote attendance, they may take advice from the Member Services Officer or Monitoring Officer prior to making a ruling. However, the Chair's decision shall be final.

#### **15. Disorderly Conduct by Members**

If a Member behaves in the manner as outlined in the Constitution (persistently ignoring or disobeying the ruling of the Chair or behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs the business of the meeting), any other Member may move 'That the member named be not further heard' which, if seconded, must be put to the vote without discussion.

If the same behaviour persists and a Motion is approved 'that the member named do leave the meeting', then (if attending via Zoom) they will be removed as a participant by the Member Services Officer.

#### **16. Disturbance from Members of the Public**

If any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chairman will warn them accordingly. If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chairman may ask the Member Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

#### **17. Technical issues – meeting management**

If the Chairman, the Hosting Officer or the Member Services Officer identifies a problem with the systems from the Council's side, the Chairman should either declare a recess while the fault is addressed or, if the fault is minor (e.g. unable to bring up a presentation), it may be appropriate to move onto the next item of business in order to progress through the agenda. If it is not possible to address the fault, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as it can be reconvened.

If the meeting was due to determine an urgent matter and it has not been possible to continue because of technical difficulties, the Chief Executive, Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall explore such other means of taking the decision as may be permitted by the Council's constitution.

Where any Member, Officer or the Public experience their own technical problems during the course of a meeting e.g. through internet connectivity or otherwise, the meeting will not be automatically suspended or adjourned.

#### **18. Technical issues – Individual Responsibility (Members and Officers)**

Many members, officers and the Public live in places where broadband speeds are poor, but technical issues can arise at any time for a number of reasons. The following guidelines, if followed, should help reduce disruption.

- Join public Zoom meetings by telephone if there is a problem with the internet. Before all meetings, note down or take a photograph of the front page of the agenda which has the necessary telephone numbers. Annex 1 to this protocol contains a brief step-by-step guide to what to expect
- Consider an alternative location from which to join the meeting, but staying safe and keeping confidential information secure. For officers, this may mean considering whether to come into the office, subject to this being safe and practicable (childcare etc.)
- Have to hand the telephone number of someone attending the meeting – and contact them if necessary to explain the problem in connecting
- Officers should have an ‘understudy’ or deputy briefed and on standby to attend and present as needed (and their telephone numbers to hand)

## Phone only access to zoom meetings

(Before you start **make sure you know the Meeting ID and the Meeting Password**) – Both of these are available on the agenda for the meeting

**Call the toll free number** either on the meeting agenda or on the Outlook appointment (this will start with 0800 --- ----)

(Ensure your phone is on 'speaker' if you can)

A message will sound saying *"Welcome to Zoom, enter your meeting ID followed by the hash button"*

- **Enter Meeting ID followed by #**

Wait for next message which will say *"If you are a participant, please press hash to continue"*

- **Press #**

Wait for next message which will say *"Enter Meeting Password followed by hash"*

- **Enter 6 digit Meeting Password followed by #**

Wait for the following two messages:

*"You are currently being held in a waiting room, the Host will release you from 'hold' in a minute"*

**Wait.....**

*"You have now entered the meeting"*

### Important notes for participating in meetings

Press **\*6** to toggle between **'mute'** and **'unmute'** (you should always ensure you are muted until you are called upon to speak)

If you wish to speak you can **'raise your hand'** by pressing **\*9**. Wait for the Chairman to call you to speak. The Host will lower your hand after you have spoken. Make sure you mute yourself afterwards.

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 19 July 2021 at 2.15 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

B G J Warren (Chairman)  
G Barnell, E J Berry, Mrs F J Colthorpe,  
L J Cruwys, Mrs S Griggs, P J Heal,  
F W Letch, S Pugh, R F Radford,  
Ms E J Wainwright and A Wilce

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillor(s)**

R M Deed, B Holdman and B A Moore

### **Also Present**

#### **Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration), Maria De Leiburne (Operations Manager Legal and Monitoring), Catherine Yandle (Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

## **17 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.03.16)**

There were no apologies.

## **18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.34)**

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interests where appropriate.

## **19 HYBRID MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.03.42)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*Hybrid Meetings Protocol.

Note: \*Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## **20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.55)**

There were no questions from members of the public present.

## **21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.04.08)**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 22 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0.09.43)**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> July had been called in.

## 23 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.09.54)**

The Chairman announced that the Planning Enforcement Working Group was nearing completion and a final report would be brought to the September meeting.

## 24 **S106 UPDATE (0.40.41)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED**, a \*report of the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration providing a S106 update.

The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration provided an overview of the report which set out the current status of S106 funding, the legal constraints and current governance arrangements.

She informed Members that following the adoption of governance arrangements in October 2020 the S106 Board had been convened on several occasions.

She explained that the report provided information on the financial information over a number of years. S106 refunds were when money had been taken up front and then refunded to developers if planning approval had been refused or approved applications were not built out.

The Officer explained that S106 contributions from 3 Rivers Developments Ltd were dealt with in the same way as any other developer.

She went on to explain that the Governments White Paper was likely to bring significant changes and reform for Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) and S106 contributions. The Government was yet to publish its response to consultation on the White Paper.

In response to questions asked she responded:

- Up to date information would be provided to Ward Members for specific parishes asked for;
- The S106 financial administration was moving from the Planning service to the Benefits, Income and Recovery service;
- S106 Policy Interpretation was staying within the Planning service;
- The Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer would deal with getting applications through the process and liaison with Ward Members and Parishes. The process would be provided to Members;
- A process for updating the membership of the S106 Board would be developed;
- Consideration would be given to including the Climate and Sustainability Specialist onto the S106 Board;
- That there were no specific time limits of when awarded S106 funding should be spent but there had been no instances of money having to be returned to developers because it had not been spent on time;

- That developers were not routinely informed on what their S106 contributions had been spent on but they were given the information if they enquired after it.

There followed a general discussion on the need for Ward Members and Parishes to be involved with the S106 funding requirements at an early stage of an application. The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration confirmed that the governance arrangements sought engagement with Ward Members and Parishes on project nominations with planning applications and heads of terms being able to be commented on and views known at an early stage of an application. Officers in Development Management had been reminded of the governance arrangements and the need to engage with Ward Members and Parishes at an early stage.

In response to a question asked about the procedure for the delegation of affordable housing offsite monies the officer responded that:

- Offsite contributions would be less common moving forward due to the adoption of the new Local Plan and an updated policy approach under Policy S3 in terms of whether affordable housing was provided on site;
- The Housing Enabling Officer now in post was a joint officer working in a shared post with the Forward Planning service which would see a more joined up approach looking at financial contributions for affordable housing;
- Often within S106 agreements there were cascade clauses incorporated which set out the sequence for spend and who would be eligible to occupy such developments
- Requests were received from providers of affordable housing and community land trusts to access S106 funding for such developments
- Further details on the affordable housing S106 funding and the need of the Housing Enabling Officer to understand the needs of the Parishes and liaising with them to coordinate the best schemes in the best areas would be made available to Members

Note: \*Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 25 **MEETING MANAGEMENT**

The Chairman informed the Committee that he would be taking agenda item 13, Scrutiny Proposal Form, as the next item of business.

## 26 **SCRUTINY PROPOSAL FORM (0.50.15)**

The Chairman introduced a Scrutiny Proposal form that he had submitted and informed Members that members of the public had raised concerns with him about the resource available within the Council to deliver the Eastern Urban Extension.

The Chief Executive explained he had provided a short briefing note to assist Members to understand what was already in place to scrutinise the development of the Eastern Urban Extension.

Members discussed the proposal and relayed their thoughts on the following:

- That they wanted to understand how the different developments knitted together

- They wanted to explore working with the Town Council looking at issues with the developments coming forward
- A Scrutiny Working Group looking solely at the Eastern Urban Extension would compromise what had already been agreed within the Local Plan
- The advice given by the Monitoring Officer that there should be no duplication or conflict of interests and that Members of the Planning Committee should not sit on the Working Group
- Members views that knowledge did not mean predetermination
- Members views that the Planning applications coming forward had to be determined by the Planning Committee
- Training and education could be provided to Town Councils and Ward Members on how the Local Plan was implemented
- Members views that there was a lack of community engagement with the roll out of the developments

Cllr G Barnell moved, seconded by Cllr L J Cruwys that: A joint working group be formed, set up by the MDDC Scrutiny Committee with the Tiverton Town Council and other relevant stakeholders. The task was to provide oversight and scrutiny of the delivery of the MDDC Local Plan in and around Tiverton including the two Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension Masterplans, the Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan and possibly the Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan.

Upon a vote being taken the proposal was not supported.

Notes:

- i.) Cllrs G Barnell, L J Cruwys and Ms E Wainwright requested that their vote for the proposal be recorded;
- ii.) Cllrs Mrs F J Colthorpe, E J Berry, P Heal and R Radford requested that their vote against the proposal be recorded;
- iii.) Cllr F W Letch requested that his abstention from voting be recorded;
- iv.) \*Proposal form previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 27 **WHISTLEBLOWING 6 MONTH UPDATE (1.33.00)**

There were no Whistleblowing instances to report.

## 28 **FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT (1.34.33)**

The Committee had before, and **NOTED**, the Financial Outturn \*Report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) which provided the Revenue and Outturn figures for the financial year 2020/2021.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) explained that the Council had faced some huge financial challenges during the year but final figures had shown a remarkable achievement.

He highlighted the work completed to distribute 90% of covid relief funding to local business of £20m and that a large capital spend budget had been carried forward due to planned capital projects being put on hold due to the pandemic.

In response to Member questions he responded:



- The report was generic and had been seen by the Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> July and that Members of Scrutiny were not being asked to approve anything;
- The impairment figures were his view if all loans would be repaid and this would be verified by the external auditor in the annual accounts;
- He would provide the cumulative total of all loans to 3 Rivers Developments Ltd and the timeframes for repayment
- He could not elaborate on the details of the contract dispute due to legal constraints
- The New Homes Bonus was not ring fenced for social housing and the Council had made a decision to use the funds towards capital projects
- The Council received a new burdens grant which enabled the administration costs of paying out the Governments Covid relief grants to be covered.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) invited Members to contact him if they required additional information on impairment and loans to 3 Rivers Developments Ltd.

Note: \*Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 29 **FORWARD PLAN (1.58.24)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** the \*Forward Plan.

Note: \*Plan previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

## 30 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (2.00.26)**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that she would investigate when an update on the recommendations of the Customer Service Working Group would be brought to Committee.

An informal Work Programming Session would be arranged for August, date to be confirmed.

## 31 **WORK PLAN (2.01.23)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*Scrutiny Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022.

No items were brought forward for consideration for inclusion on the Work Plan.

Note: \*Work Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

(The meeting ended at 4.17 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

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## HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 20 JULY 2021

### HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Bob Evans  
**Responsible Officer:** Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

**Reason for Report and Recommendation:** To provide Members of the Policy Development Group with an opportunity to review the proposed consultation draft of the revised corporate Housing Strategy.

The reason for the recommendations is to ensure we can progress to the next key consultation stage leading to the adoption of the Strategy and have approval with regards to the overall adoption process.

#### **Recommendation:**

**(a) Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-25 attached in Annex 1 for external and public consultation**

**(b) Members note the proposed timeline and stages for adoption of the Housing Strategy as set out in section 3.2 of this report**

**Financial Implications:** None directly arising from this report.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** There are no direct budget implications of this report.

This strategy sets out those opportunities and challenges in respect of several key delivery functions; housing delivery, enabling and renewal/standards alongside housing needs and homelessness. As such it links with a much wider policy framework, adopted or in development.

The current strategy was adopted in 2015 and ran for the period 2015-20. It was therefore due for review and updating to reflect the current priorities, needs and aspirations of our community in respect of having access to affordable, safe and healthy housing.

**Legal Implications:** The strategy has no formal basis and is no legal requirement for have one. Nonetheless, it will provide links to a number of formal requirements on the Council, for example in acting as the Strategic Housing Authority and social housing provider and the Local Planning Authority.

**Risk Assessment:** The new strategy provides a framework for the delivery of those key functions and priorities outlined above. In doing so, it will help in the development of a coherent and consistent approach to housing across the district.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Not applicable at this stage. An EIA will be attached to the final draft of the Strategy post-consultation.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Our Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 has four key priority areas one of which is Homes. Within each priority strand the Council has committed to ensuring we are working towards sustainable and prosperous communities. This includes a recognition that our villages and towns need affordable housing for local people. There are number of specific actions that underpin this commitment includes targets for the delivery of affordable housing, working with community land trusts and private sector landlords and working to improve the supply of quality housing.

**Impact on Climate Change:** Decisions relating to the management and maintenance of the homes belonging to the Council and influence the carbon performance of market or community led housing will enable officers and Members of the Council to influence the direction of travel against appropriate targets. We can use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level.

More detail on the links between the Strategy and our actions on climate change is set out in the document itself and as summarised in Section 4 below.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Homes are a basic necessity and a fundamental requirement for everybody. Local authorities have a broad role to play in supporting and regulating the housing sector, and in facilitating the delivery of new housing.
- 1.2 All agencies, including the NHS and social care are impacted by housing - in relation to its availability, quality and suitability where poor housing leads to significant health inequalities. In short, good quality housing is the foundation of upon which people can build happy and successful lives. The economy also relies on a sufficient supply of housing in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.
- 1.3 Tackling our housing needs and requirements are not something that one service or organisation can achieve on its own. Local authorities, registered social landlords, developers, the NHS, social care and the voluntary/ community sectors all have important roles to play.
- 1.4 With budgets are under pressure, and economic reality of the Covid-19 pandemic just starting to be realised there is an increasing demand for our services and safe, affordable accommodation. Having a clear, coherent strategy in place that sets out our leadership and direction is more important than ever where effective internal and external partnerships are in place.
- 1.5 This report follows on from a previous update provided to members in January 2021 and sets out the proposed consultation draft of the updated Housing Strategy 2021-25.
- 1.6 As agreed by the Policy Development Group in January, the development of this draft document has been led by a Strategy Working Group with a wide range of internal stakeholders and contributors as set out below.

## **Project Board**

- Cllr Bob Evans – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services
- Jill May - Director of Business Improvement and Operations
- Jenny Clifford – Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

## **Project Lead and Manager**

- Simon Newcombe – Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

## **Project Team**

- Tristan Peat - Forward Planning Team Leader
- Arron Beecham - Principal Housing Enabling and Forward Planning Officer
- Andrew Busby - Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure & Climate Change
- Tanya Wenham – Operations Manager for Public Health and Housing Options
- Claire Fry – Operations Manager for Housing
- Michael Lowman – Operations Manager for Building Services
- Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist

## **2.0 Strategy overview**

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy sets out our vision a Council for the provision and management of housing over the next five years. In particular, as set out in the document foreword, it puts forward the following vision.

*Our vision is to meet the housing needs and aspirations of our residents through a greater choice of high-quality new and adapted homes. This will help us to support the social wellbeing needs of everyone who lives in Mid Devon and provide high quality growth in a high quality environment*

## **Purpose**

- 2.2 Building on this vision, the purpose of the Strategy is to provide a clear direction, for the next five years, to offer more housing with more choice by developing new homes and improving existing homes and communities. There is a particular focus on affordable and social rent properties alongside a strong commitment to having low-carbon, accessible and adaptable homes. This means we can support our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain good quality housing which meets their needs.

## **Strategic context**

- 2.3 The Housing Strategy for Mid Devon does not stand alone and most of the priorities and actions within it operate alongside existing strategies, delivery plans and policies. In particular, it is guided by policies and priorities outlined in the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 and the Corporate Plan 2020-24.

- 2.4 This Strategy has also been developed in the context of the role of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership which aims to boost the regional economy across the Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay region with high living standards and outstanding quality of life.
- 2.5 It is important that Mid Devon continues to contribute towards regional ambitions for growth by continuing to work with other Local Authorities and regional partners. From a national perspective, in recent years the Government has introduced a raft of new legislation to stimulate and speed up housing supply across all forms of tenure and to reform the welfare system. Most recently, in November 2020 we saw the publication of the Government's Social Housing White Paper which will place new responsibilities on us as a Social Landlord and direct provider of social housing.
- 2.6 We have taken these changes, opportunities and strategic direction of travel into account within the development of this draft document. It is also important that we are responsive to further legislative changes as they emerge and shape these policies to meet the needs of our local housing market. This Strategy sets out Mid Devon District Council's considered housing plans and actions for the period 2021-2025 taking into account the national, regional and local context as discussed in more detail in the introduction to the Strategy itself.

### **Priorities and objectives**

- 2.7 In recognising the above context, the following 'HOME' priorities have been developed, as previously introduced in the January report, taking into account the supporting evidence and documents that underpin the Strategy.

**Housing** - increase delivery of quality designed, well-built homes across the housing market to meet identified needs

**Optimise** - fit for purpose healthy, sustainable, adaptable homes optimised for high energy efficiency and low carbon impact

**Making the most** - making the most of our existing homes across the private and public sector in all forms of tenure

**Engage** - engaging and working with others including partner organisations to deliver our aims

- 2.8 Consequently, the Strategy is divided into four chapters which expand upon each of our key housing priorities. All priorities have equal weighting; each impacts on the other and much of the work around these priorities will necessarily be overlapping and interdependent.
- 2.9 Within each chapter are specific objectives and targets to deliver the different elements that make up each priority.
- 2.10 Overall, some 40 objectives are described within the Strategy and ultimately this provides a detailed but strong framework; setting direction for each of our partners and stakeholders involved in housing; residents, ward members, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors,

private landlords, charities, voluntary groups and the Council – to provide the right type of homes that are needed.

- 2.11 Members will therefore need to consider the document and the objectives set out holistically within boundaries of where we have an influencing, commissioning or direct delivery role with regard to the provision of housing. Within the latter, members have previously expressed a direct interest in the delivery of new Council Houses. These are covered in Chapter One of the document and Objectives 5 and 6 specifically. More information is provided in Annex 2 on the information that underpins a combined target to provide 160 new Council Houses by 2025 of a mix of social and affordable rent.
- 2.12 Finally, the Strategy, in its conclusion, sets out how its priorities and objectives will be delivered, reviewed and updated going forward.

### **3.0 Proposed adoption timeline and consultation**

- 3.1 The Mid Devon Scrutiny committee meeting in June 2021 considered the pending adoption of an updated Housing Strategy and noted that the document would be considered by this PDG and Cabinet in its first round for approval to go to consultation and then be considered by Scrutiny committee prior to it coming back to the PDG ahead of a final recommendation to Cabinet to adopt the final Strategy.

- 3.2 Accordingly, the following consultation roadmap and timeline is proposed:

- 20 July – Housing PDG with recommendation that Cabinet approve draft for consultation
- 16 August – Scrutiny Committee
- 31 August – Cabinet with recommendation to approve draft for consultation
- September external consultation
- 20 September – verbal update to Housing PDG on initial consultation feedback
- Late September – early October – final updates to Strategy document
- 26 October – Cabinet recommendation to adopt final strategy

- 3.3 In addition to general public consultation, it is proposed that a targeted consultation on the draft Strategy will be carried out with a wide range of interested regional and local organisations as set out in Page 11 of the Strategy.

### **4.0 Links with Climate Change**

- 4.1 Housing is one the largest contributors to carbon emissions and is itself potentially very widely impacted by the effects of climate change. A key thread throughout the Strategy was recognising and responding to this link and support our wider climate aspirations within both the Corporate Plan and our Carbon Action Plan. This is explored further below.

- 4.2 Our Corporate Plan and links to this strategy on Climate Change:

- Introduce zero carbon policies for new development

- Encourage the piloting of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and self-build opportunities
- Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc)

## Sustainability

- 4.3 Mid Devon District Council is committed to tackling climate change and how our whole way of living influences our environment. Sustainability is a priority within this Strategy and the specific Objectives set out how we will address sustainability issues through partnership and innovative design and development of new housing and the refurbishment of existing properties.
- 4.4 Sustainable development can be defined as *“development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.
- 4.5 Protecting and conserving the natural environment is an important essential part of that, but sustainability also incorporates economic and social elements. This means meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity.
- 4.6 The Council will also strive to improve the natural environment, including flood protection and to work to reduce consumption, increase recycling and promote low carbon energy. Existing homes and the building of new homes contribute heavily to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and therefore climate change impact. Sustainability can be said to encompass the following key aspects.

## Economic

- 4.7 Affordability of rent / purchase and running costs; proximity to a range of well-paid employment opportunities; availability of suitable and sustainable modes of transport and connectedness to local services, shops and educational opportunities.
- 4.8 The opportunity to achieve both environmental and economic sustainability by ensuring that homes combine the benefits of low or zero/no carbon energy or heating performance with the economic benefits of lower running costs are is critical.

## Social

- 4.9 Includes the suitability of housing for different types of households and incomes; adaptability of housing to meet different stages of life. As well as ensuring that accommodation for people with particular care and support needs, including those with learning and physical disabilities, are met within supportive and sustainable neighbourhoods. For example, designing homes with suitable technology to assist in care; ensuring that development of housing with support and care is included in housing developments and appropriately staffed and funded; encouraging housing providers to ensure that housing



developments incorporate space for play and recreation; considering how to facilitate intergenerational living as well as housing designated for particular age groups.

## Environmental

- 4.10 In the realm of new homes development, design features and construction methods can play a critical role in mitigating adaptation to the effects of climate change, such as flooding and overheating and in addition to mitigating climate impacts by avoiding further contributions of greenhouse gas to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- 4.11 Modular construction methods can reduce environmental impact from construction waste and transportation and build homes more quickly and with future flexibility. The location of new homes and design policies can help conserve Natural Capital, enhance rather than threaten biodiversity, and wildlife and create homes and neighbourhoods that encourage lower carbon living and more sustainable lifestyles. Local authorities have a critical role to play in planning for and guiding housing development and supporting retrofitting, in order to enhance, rather than compromise, our environment. The Council's policies and associated strategies, including Public Health policies all have a part to play in delivering economically, socially and environmentally sustainable housing.
- 4.12 In the realm of existing homes, retrofitting and improving the environmental efficiency of homes is a key aspect of decarbonising our society, reducing fuel poverty and meeting our climate targets.

## Community-led and self-build Housing

- 4.13 In recent year's central government has encouraged community groups, parish councils and local authorities to promote community-led affordable housing development and opportunities for self-build. Dedicated funding has been made available through the Community Housing Fund to build capacity for community-led housing initiatives.

## 5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendations are therefore made:
  - (a) Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-25 attached in Annex 1 for external and public consultation
  - (b) Members note the proposed timeline and stages for adoption of the Housing Strategy as set out in section 3.2 of this report

**Contact for more Information:** Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing [snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:**

Members of the Housing PDG  
Cllr Bob Evans, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services  
Leadership Team  
Corporate Management Team  
Service/Operations Managers  
Legal Services  
Housing Strategy Working Group

**List of Background Papers:**

Current MDDC Housing Strategy  
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/>



## Annex 2

**Objective 5 of the Strategy seeks to retain a viable Council Housing stock baseline of a minimum 3,000 properties through full use of available Right to Buy (RTB) 1-4-1 receipts.**

How measured - Monitor the number of social rent properties delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock

Target - Deliver 60 new Council homes between 21- 25 and a further 20 by 2027

The initial 60 unit target for 21 – 25 is set out in the MDDC 5-Year Right-to-Buy (RTB) receipts 1-4-1 Build Programme as summarised below. This is a rolling plan and once future receipts are ascertained then years 26-27 will be added with an estimated target of 20 units.

| Year Of Receipt                              | 2018/19            | 2019/20            | 2020/21            | 2021/22            | 2022/23            | Totals        |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Year of Accountability                       | 2021/22            | 2022/23            | 2023/24            | 2024/25            | 2025/26            |               |
| 1-4-1 Receipts                               | £1,040,248.82      | £539,555.82        | £484,409.82        | £568,409.82        | £836,409.54        | £3,469,033.82 |
| Utilisation Expenditure @ 40%                | £2,600,622.05      | £1,348,889.55      | £1,211,024.56      | £1,421,024.55      | £2,091,023.83      | £8,672,584.54 |
| Residual Funding Requirement (MDDC)          | £1,560,373.23      | £809,333.73        | £726,614.73        | £852,614.73        | £1,254,614.30      | £5,203,550.72 |
|  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |               |
|  | <b>1-4-1 Usage</b> | <b>1-4-1 Usage</b> | <b>1-4-1 Usage</b> | <b>1-4-1 Usage</b> | <b>1-4-1 Usage</b> | <b>Units</b>  |
| Location in Cullompton (6 Pods) - see Note 1 | £390,000.00        |                    |                    |                    |                    | 6             |
| Location in Tiverton (8 Pods) - see Note 1   | £550,000.00        |                    |                    |                    |                    | 8             |
| 3 Buy Backs at Average Cost                  | £160,000.00        |                    |                    |                    |                    | 3             |
| <b>2021/22 Total</b>                         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | <b>17</b>     |
| Beech Road, Tiverton (3 new)                 |                    | £190,000.00        |                    |                    |                    | 3             |
| Westfield Road, Tiverton (1 new)             |                    | £14,000.00         |                    |                    |                    | 1             |
| Siddalls Gardens, Tiverton (2 new)           |                    | £52,000.00         |                    |                    |                    | 2             |
| 3 Buy Backs at Average Cost                  |                    | £160,000.00        |                    |                    |                    | 2             |
| <b>2022/23 Total</b>                         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | <b>8</b>      |

|   |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Wordland Cross, Cheriton Fitzpaine (6 new)  |                      |                    | £300,000.00        |                    |                      | 6                    |
| 3 Buy Backs at Average Cost                 |                      |                    | £160,000.00        |                    |                      | 3                    |
| Hunters Way, Culmstock (1 new)              |                      |                    | £56,000.00         |                    |                      | 1                    |
| <b>2023/24 Total</b>                        |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      | <b>10</b>            |
| Palmerston Park, Tiverton (1 new)           |                      |                    |                    | £54,000.00         |                      | 1                    |
| Barnes Close, Willand (1 new)               |                      |                    |                    | £54,000.00         |                      | 1                    |
| 3 Buy Backs at Average Cost                 |                      |                    |                    | £160,000.00        |                      | 3                    |
| Allington Terrace, Morchard Road (1 new)    |                      |                    |                    | £64,000.00         |                      | 1                    |
| <b>2024/25 Total</b>                        |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      | <b>6</b>             |
| Location in Tiverton (14 Pods) - see Note 2 |                      |                    |                    |                    | £880,033.82          | 14                   |
| Bowley Meadow, Bradninch (2 new)            |                      |                    |                    |                    | £65,000.00           | 2                    |
| 3 Buy Backs at Average Cost                 |                      |                    |                    |                    | £160,000.00          | 3                    |
| <b>2025/26 Total</b>                        |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      | <b>19</b>            |
|   |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      |                      |
|   |                      |                    |                    |                    |                      | <b>60</b>            |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>£1,100,000.00</b> | <b>£416,000.00</b> | <b>£516,000.00</b> | <b>£332,000.00</b> | <b>£1,105,033.82</b> | <b>£3,469,033.82</b> |

Note 1 – locations subject to pre-planning and public/resident scheme specific consultation in July 2021 and therefore locations are not specified within this report however will be made public when the formal consultation is live

Note 2 – location will be subject to future public/resident consultations and therefore is not specified at this stage within this report

**Objective 6 of the Strategy seeks to grow the Mid Devon Council Housing stock beyond baseline through additional, non 1-4-1 mechanisms, for example s106 or Homes England Affordable Homes programme.**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Target -       | Deliver 70 new Council homes between 21 – 23 and additional 15 homes per annum thereafter to 2025                                |
| How measured – | Monitor the number of social rent and affordable homes delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock |

The initial target to 2023 will be met through the delivery of 70 affordable homes (including 8 for social rent) at Post Hill, Tiverton. The remainder will be met through additional sites at the latter end of the strategy period, split nominally 15 units each year through the Affordable Homes Programme or related schemes.



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# **A Housing Strategy for Mid Devon 2021-2025**







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# Foreword

## Our vision for Mid Devon

Our vision is to meet the housing needs and aspirations of our residents through a greater choice of high-quality new and adapted homes. This will help us to support the social wellbeing needs of everyone who lives in Mid Devon and provide high quality growth in a high quality environment.

Having a good home is vitally important. It is important for our health, education, feeling of security and of course our economic well-being. It can give the best start in life to our children and the best care and support required in our later years. Housing encompasses every aspect and all stages of our life. It is the foundation upon which people can build happy and successful lives, allowing communities to thrive. Such communities not only serve current residents, but encourage those seeking positive change, helping to build multi-skilled and multi-cultural societies.

New housing and a greater choice of housing is also a key part of our economic transformation strategy. The right mix of good quality housing of all types, sizes and tenures will underpin our skills offer to new business investment by meeting the needs of our current and future residents. It is important that we support housing growth to meet a growing population and to support economic growth, but this cannot be achieved solely by developing new homes, but also by focusing on our existing stock and making better use of it for everyone, including our vulnerable households.

We know that achieving our vision will not be easy in these times of constant change and with fewer resources, but it is important that we are ambitious and innovative in realising our vision and continue to improve the excellent housing services we have in Mid Devon. Partnership working will be key to this. The economy will continue to change and new housing policy will emerge through the life of this strategy. We need to make sure we are prepared for these changes and can adapt to meet local housing need.

With our partners we will work hard to bring to reality our vision and the priorities within this strategy.



**Cllr. Bob Evans**

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services

# Introduction

## Strategic context

The Housing Strategy for Mid Devon does not stand alone and most of the priorities and actions within it operate alongside existing strategies, delivery plans and policies. In particular it is guided by policies and priorities outlined in the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 and the Corporate Plan 2020-24.

This strategy has also been developed in the context of the role of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership which aims to boost the regional economy across the Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay region with high living standards and outstanding quality of life.

It is important that Mid Devon continues to contribute towards regional ambitions for growth by continuing to work with other Local Authorities and regional partners. From a national perspective, in recent years the Government has introduced a raft of new legislation to stimulate and speed up housing supply across all forms of tenure and to reform the welfare system. Most recently, in November 2020 we saw the publication of the Government's Social Housing White Paper which will place new responsibilities on us as a Social Landlord and direct provider of social housing.

There is an agreement from all major political parties nationally that housing is a top national priority. That presents an opportunity for local authorities and their partners to deliver effective leadership that brings together communities, housing, town and country planning together with public health and social care. This strategy is looking to provide a combined commitment within these complex strands for the benefit of our residents, building upon and developing a number of informal and formal partnerships we already have in place. A strong corporate commitment and effective leadership features strongly in this Strategy. We hope that the delivery of the strategy will be a catalyst for innovation, positive change and a more sustainable housing landscape that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we are trying to do.

We have taken these changes, opportunities and strategic direction of travel into account within the development of this strategy. It is also important that we are responsive to further legislative changes as they emerge and shape these policies to meet the needs of our local housing market. This strategy sets out Mid Devon District Council's considered housing plans and actions for the period 2021-2025 taking into account the national, regional and local context set out below.

### **National Context**

- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 2004
- Localism Act 2011
- Laying The Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- National Planning Policy Framework 2020
- Care Act 2014
- English Housing Survey 2015-2016
- The Charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper 2020

### **Regional Context**

- Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership 'Blueprint for Clean Growth' 2021
- Devon County Council/NHS Devon CCG Housing and Accommodation Strategy - Healthy Lives, Vibrant Communities and Housing Choices 2020-2025
- Exeter City Council Housing Strategy 2016-2020
- East Devon Housing Strategy 2017
- Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023

### **Local Context**

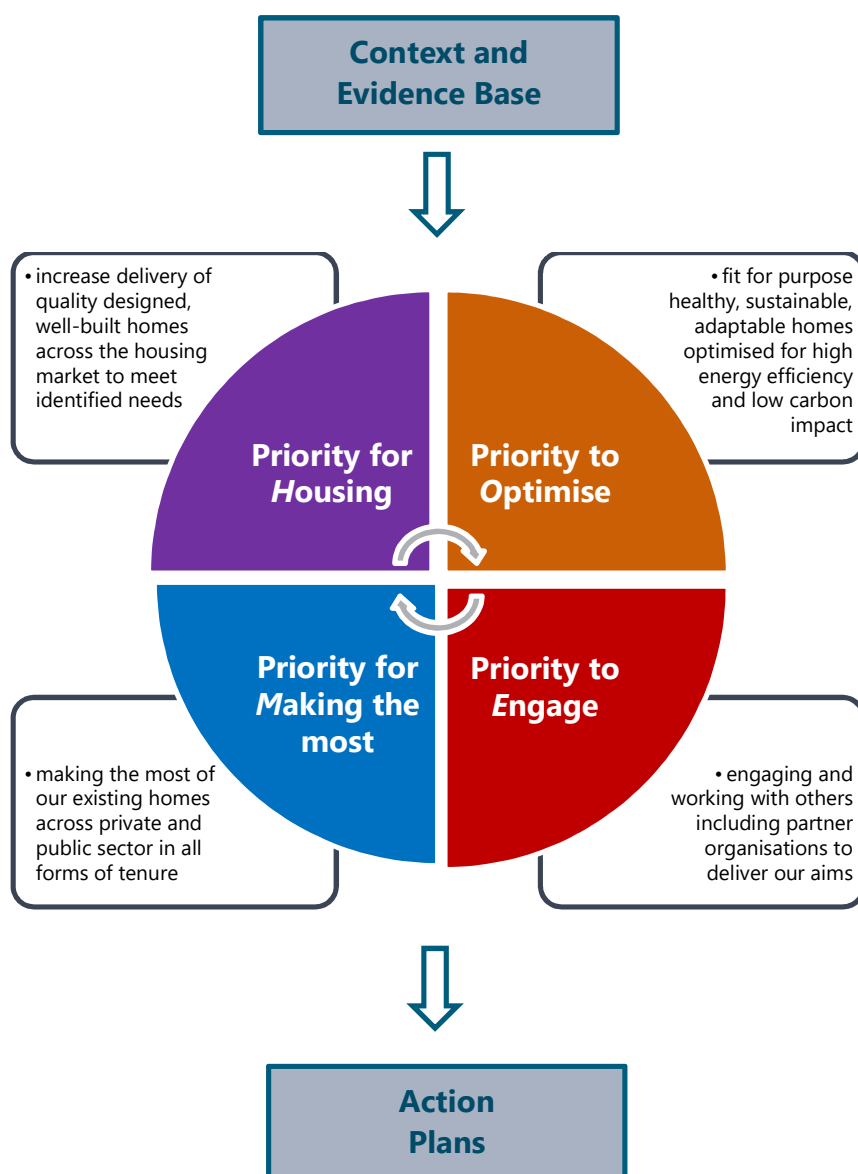
- Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033
- Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (in development)
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Corporate Plan 2020-24
- Housing Assistance Policy 2019
- Homeless Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
- Housing Strategy 2015-2020
- Enforcement Policy 2020
- Tenant Census Report 2020

## A Housing Strategy for Mid Devon District Council 2021 – 25

In recognising the national, regional and local context for this strategy the following priorities (HOME) have been developed. These also take account of the supporting evidence and documents that underpin this context.

All priorities have equal status and are interdependent. One cannot be delivered without the other.

### Housing Strategy for Mid Devon 2021 - 2025



## We are Mid Devon

Mid Devon is a fantastic place to live, work, study and visit. As a rural district we cover an area of 353 square miles (914 km<sup>2</sup>) in the beautiful agricultural heartland of Devon, between Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills.

More than half the population of some 82,000 people is scattered in villages in the rural hinterland, with the balance divided between the three main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton.

While it is the 23rd-largest district council in England by area, it is also the 34th-smallest by population. We lie to the north of the city of Exeter, one of the most rapidly expanding economies in the country, and as a district council Mid Devon has sought to maximise this opportunity by delivering quality growth in a high-quality environment.

Mid Devon District Council is a progressive council committed to providing high quality and sustainable services, creating an environment where communities and businesses can flourish and grow together. Our forward looking Local Plan is recently adopted and our Council Housing, Homelessness and Private Sector Housing services are all held in high regard.

## Key achievements

This strategy builds upon our previous housing strategy in which we have made significant progress in addressing our key housing issues. The following are some of the key achievements since 2015:

- Directly provided over 40 new social rent homes to our stock of Council Housing
- The opening of our new, award nominated Turner Rise scheme of 26 properties in Tiverton (2020 South West LABC Building Excellence Award in the Best New Small Social or Affordable Housing Development category)
- Developed an ambitious new build programme for social rent and affordable housing for our Council Housing stock
- Currently commissioning a major new scheme for 70 new affordable homes at Post Hill Tiverton which will also be part of our Council Housing stock
- As a further part of our Council Housing stock, we have commissioned innovative net-carbon zero modular 'Zed Pods' social rent schemes in Cullompton and Tiverton for completion this year; one of the first such social housing schemes nationally
- Successful national Culm Garden Village expression of interest has led to a long-term plan to deliver up to 5,000 sustainable new homes alongside key facilities, infrastructure and a country park
- The planning system has been used effectively with an additional 418 affordable homes, delivered through planning obligations

- Have given planning permission to over 4 self-build plots since the adoption of the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 and the introduction of a policy for custom and self-build
- Received a Community-Led Housing Fund grant of over £131,000 ring-fenced for the delivery Community Led Housing
- Brought over 500 empty homes back into use
- Undertaken joint working with Wessex Community Housing to support Community Land Trusts over 4 years and have a Community Housing Fund project group in place to support more community led housing schemes
- We have assisted more than 290 disabled residents to continue to live in their own homes with Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)
- Completed 20 Eco-flex grants to deliver energy efficiency and affordable warmth improvements to these residential properties
- We have responded to over 300 housing complaints, of which 140 included the most serious Category 1 Hazards
- Inspected 120 properties as potential Houses in Multiple Occupation and licensed 19
- We have met Decent Homes Standard across our entire Council Housing Stock (around 3,000 homes)
- Fully refurbished Ivor Macey House as a specialist temporary accommodation unit
- We conducted a review and produced a new Homeless Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
- Provided hundreds of 'Lifeline' community alarms to help households to continue living independently in their own homes.

## Challenges

We recognise that there are still significant challenges to address, as a rural county we have a very low population density of 0.9 people per hectare (compared to England average of 4.1) with a higher dispersed, ageing housing stock.

Pockets of social isolation exist in many communities, often related to age, poverty, slow broadband speeds and lack of transport.

Our average income remains below the national average with a relatively low-pay economy, but local house prices continuing to remain too high for many on low to medium incomes to afford.

Projections indicate that the biggest rise in future population growth will occur amongst older people. We need to plan to meet these changing needs and ensure that older people get the housing and support that they need. People are living longer, but more of our lives are spent in ill health or disability.

We also have an in migration of 40+ year olds seeking lifestyle change, using capital asset of homes in higher house price areas to outbid / out compete local people and out migration of younger people for education and work

Housing supply remains an issue, especially for one-bedroom properties due to increase of single-person households, especially older persons and the single under 35s. We also have a shortage of larger, family properties with 3+ bedrooms.

The Council has also declared a Climate Emergency and all new policy and strategy documents will need to be set against our low carbon and other environmental priorities. We are working with all Devon local authorities to a County wide target of 2050, but will aim for Mid Devon District Council to achieve Net Zero by a more ambitious date of 2030, also supporting our communities to reach Net Zero.

### **Purpose of the strategy**

Our Housing Strategy sets out a clear direction, for the next five years, to offer more housing with more choice by developing new homes and improving existing homes and communities. There is a particular focus on affordable and social rent properties alongside a strong commitment to having low-carbon, accessible and adaptable homes. This means we can support our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain good quality housing which meets their needs. This will help our hamlets, villages and towns to be sustainable in the longer term and contribute to the district's prosperity and wellbeing.

The strategy is divided into four chapters which expand upon each of our key housing priorities. All priorities have equal weighting; each impacts on the other and much of the work around these priorities will necessarily be overlapping and interdependent.

The Council cannot achieve this alone which we recognise by making engagement and working with others one of our priorities. This strategy can only be achieved by working closely with partners, residents and communities as shared resources and innovative partnerships and solutions are the best way forward to meet future challenges.

Ultimately, this strategy is a framework; setting direction for each of our partners and stakeholders involved in housing; residents, ward members, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors, private landlords, charities, voluntary groups and the Council – to provide the right type of homes that are needed. This, in turn, provides the foundation for our residents to reach their potential and for our communities to thrive.



## Development of the strategy and consultation

The development of this strategy was led by a Strategy working group with a wide range of key internal stakeholders and contributors.

### **Project Board**

Cllr Bob Evans – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services  
Jill May – Director of Business Improvement and Operations  
Jenny Clifford – Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

### **Project Lead and Manager**

Simon Newcombe – Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

### **Project Team**

Tristan Peat – Forward Planning Team Leader  
Arron Beecham – Principal Housing Enabling and Forward Planning Officer  
Andrew Busby – Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure & Climate Change  
Tanya Wenham – Operations Manager for Public Health and Housing Options  
Claire Fry – Operations Manager for Housing  
Michael Lowman – Operations Manager for Building Services  
Jason Ball – Climate and Sustainability Specialist

Prior to wider, public and external stakeholder consultation on this strategy, internal consultation on a draft strategy was undertaken with all operational service leads, Legal Services and Leadership Team at the Council before consideration by the Council's member Housing Policy Development Group and Cabinet.

In addition to indirect public consultation, a targeted consultation on the final draft Strategy will be carried out with the following organisations:

- Exeter City Council, East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils (Exeter Strategic Housing Market Area)
- North Devon and Somerset West and Taunton Councils (neighbouring Local Authorities)
- Devon County Council
- Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT)
- Devon Rural Housing Partnership
- Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership
- Devon Home Choice
- Registered Providers (Housing Associations)
- Mid Devon Gypsy and Traveller Forum
- Town and Parish Councils
- Lendology Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Navigate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

# CHAPTER ONE

## **Strategic Housing Priority 1: Housing - increase delivery of quality designed, well-built homes across the housing market to meet identified needs**

There are 19 objectives within this strategic priority:

### ***Maintaining a supply of new homes and sustainability***

Objective 1 - Maintain the supply of new homes in Mid Devon

### ***Meeting all housing needs of all types and tenures and type***

Objective 2 - Focus the delivery of new homes in sustainable places

Objective 3 - Secure more affordable housing

Objective 4 – First Homes

Objective 5 - Retain a viable Council Housing stock baseline of a minimum 3,000 properties through full use of available 1-4-1 receipts

Objective 6 – Grow the Mid Devon Council Housing stock beyond baseline through additional mechanisms

### ***Meeting housing needs of rural communities***

Objective 7 – Understand housing need in rural areas

Objective 8 - Support community led housing schemes

### ***Raising building design standards – accessibility, design quality and climate change***

Objective 9 – Improve accessibility standards in new homes

Objective 10 – Improve design quality in new homes

Objective 11 – Improve the climate change sustainability and resilience of new Council Housing

### ***Preventing homelessness and supporting priority households***

Objective 12 – Minimising rough sleeping

Objective 13 – Maximising prevention activities and outcomes

Objective 14 – Increasing accommodation options

Objective 15 – Improving health and wellbeing by supporting those with complex needs

### ***Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople provision***

Objective 16 – Meet the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers

### ***Modern methods of construction***

Objective 17 – Pilot modern methods of construction (MMC)

### ***Custom and Self-Build***

Objective 18 - Facilitate the delivery of serviced plots for custom and self-build housing

Objective 19 - Support custom and self-build

## 1.0 Housing

### *Maintaining a supply of new homes*

- 1.1 The Council has a key role in the delivery of new homes in Mid Devon, both as the Local Planning Authority facilitating new homes through the planning process and as a Housing Authority responsible for providing and maintaining a retained stock of council houses.
- 1.2 The Mid Devon Local Plan Review was adopted on 29th July 2020. This sets a target for the delivery of 393 new homes across the district (excluding the part within the Dartmoor National Park) each year in the period to 2033. The target has been informed through a technical assessment of housing need completed in 2015, known as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) or Local Housing Assessment (LHNA) and a study which identified further new homes needed as a result of jobs created through major tourism, leisure and shopping development proposed at Junction 27. The Local Plan includes provision for delivering 393 new homes each year on sites that are allocated for development at the three main towns and some of the identified villages, and also through development on windfall sites.
- 1.3 The annual target of a minimum of 393 new homes delivered each year is used to inform an assessment of whether a 5 year supply of deliverable sites for housing has been met in the district. This target will be reviewed through the preparation of a new local plan for Mid Devon, informed principally through a new Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA).

### **Objective 1 – Maintain the supply of new market homes in Mid Devon**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Number of net additional homes each year</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>393</b>                                      |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan / Mid Devon KPI 28</b>  |

- 1.4 The preparation of the Mid Devon Local Plan has been guided by national planning policy and sets out a vision, a spatial strategy and strategic and non-strategic policies for guiding where development can place and which parts of the district will be protected.
- 1.5 At the core of the Local Plan vision is achieving sustainable development where providing for the development needs of the current generation does not worsen the lives of future generations. In essence this can be achieved through meeting objectively assessed needs and guiding development to locations that are or which can be made sustainable through achieving a suitable balance of housing, employment, facilities **13**

and other uses; reducing the need to travel by car and increasing the potential for walking, cycling and public transport; reducing carbon emissions; and promote social inclusion and reduce inequalities.

- 1.6 To achieve sustainable development the spatial strategy of the Local Plan identifies Cullompton as the strategic focus of new development, Tiverton and Crediton as secondary focus of new development, and more modest growth at villages. Local Plan Policy S2 and table 5 set out the amount (minimum dwellings) and distribution of development across the district as follows: Tiverton (2,358 (30%)), Cullompton (3,930 (50%)), Crediton (786 (10%)) and Rural (786 (10%)). Monitoring development at the three main towns, villages and elsewhere in the district can help measure how sustainable development is being achieved.
- 1.7 Sustainable development can mean many things, but will include locating development in the right places; good access to public transport and opportunities to travel by active and sustainable modes, existing infrastructure including amenity space and access to shops, leisure and medical services. This is consistent with promoting community well-being and further driven by a need to reduce carbon and local pollution emissions and Government policies to cease production of internal combustion engine cars by 2030.

## Objective 2 – Focus the delivery of new homes in sustainable places

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor the amount and distribution of new housing against strategic targets</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Tiverton (30%), Cullompton (50%), Crediton (10%) and rural (10%)</b>             |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan</b>   |

### *Meeting all housing needs of all types and tenures and type*

- 1.8 National planning policy makes clear that policies in local plans should reflect the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community. This can include those who require affordable housing, travellers and people wishing to commission or build their own homes, which are the focus of this housing strategy.
- 1.9 Many households are unable to afford to buy or rent a home on the open market that meets their housing needs. Mid Devon is characterised by low wages, house prices kept high through second home ownership, a restricted supply of new homes and lack of choice. Additionally, the district can be a popular retirement destination with further inward migration from towns and cities for remote working reasons due to the Covid pandemic which can place pressure on the local property market

- 1.10 The planning process can provide a means to secure the delivery of affordable housing through new development which is kept affordable in perpetuity. This can include requiring a proportion of the new homes to be affordable on site allocations in the Local Plan and in development above a threshold, and also a policy regime for affordable housing on exceptions sites at identified settlements in rural areas where planning permission would not be granted for market housing. The Council also has a retained stock of housing which is made available to rent.
- 1.11 Not all affordable homes are of the same affordability and there is a need for a mix of types of provision (e.g. number of bedrooms / size and tenure arrangement) to help best meet all levels of need and household incomes.
- 1.12 The Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 includes a priority to deliver more affordable housing and greater numbers of social rented homes in the district and will look for opportunities to assist such schemes. However, it is recognised that social rented schemes can require a greater level of public subsidy or grant support to make them viable, than other forms of rented affordable housing.
- 1.13 The Local Plan identifies a target of 124 affordable homes to be completed each year to meet needs arising in the district. However, the ability to achieve this through securing affordable housing on development sites will be subject to those developments being viable and which could be affected where there may be a requirement for development also to meet other obligations. These could include the provision of infrastructure, open space and financial contributions towards the measures for the improvement of air quality. Where planning permission is sought for new housing it will be up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment which will be scrutinised by the Council. In recognition of the need to take viability into consideration a lower target of 94 new affordable homes each year is included in this strategy.
- 1.14 It is important to define the difference between affordable homes (those let at an affordable rent) and social rent homes.

### Social Rent

Homes let at below market rent by a registered provider. The rent level is calculated on a legal basis according to a formula based on property values and local earnings (target rent). This is set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard. Typically these rents are around 50% of the local market rate.

## Affordable Rent

Homes let at below market rent by a registered provider. The rent (including service charge) is set at up to 80% of the local market rent for an equivalent home.

### **Objective 3 – Secure more affordable housing**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor the number of affordable homes delivered</b>       |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>94 new affordable homes each year</b>                      |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024/Mid Devon Local Plan KPI 29</b> |

1.15 The Government has also recently introduced a new First Homes scheme which is open to first-time buyers. It is a specific kind of discounted market sale housing which meets the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000

As the Government's preferred discounted market tenure, the policy sets out that a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Of the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions, local authorities should prioritise their policy requirements on social rent. This scheme also allows local authorities to adopt additional local eligibility criteria which defines local connections and eligible key workers set out in policy. Local authorities can also require a higher minimum discount of either 40% or 50% as part of the plan-making process, subject to evidence of need and viability. We therefore have a further objective specifically to develop our approach to the delivery of First Homes.

### **Objective 4 – First Homes**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>First Homes Policy including local eligibility criteria developed and adopted</b>                                       |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Interim policy guidance brought into use 2021. Formal policy to be included in a new Local Plan (adoption mid 2025)</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Living Homes scheme June 2021</b>   |

Objective 4 is supported by Objective 30 in Chapter Three (Key workers).

1.16 Not all affordable homes and most social rent homes will be provided through the planning process. The Council is also the strategic housing authority and a registered provider of social housing. This means we can deliver social rent and affordable rent housing directly into our Council housing stock to be provided and managed directly by us.

1.17 There are several mechanisms whereby we can deliver new social rent homes:

The primary mechanism is:

Utilisation of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts from the sale of existing homes in conjunction with additional capital funding provided through our Housing Revenue Account and public sector borrowing.

These RTB funds are capped to limit how much can be used to contribute to the overall cost of each new home and therefore are largely used on a one-for-one (or 1-4-1) replacement basis though we aim to do slightly better than this in order to maintain a critical mass in housing stock and a sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

We cannot combine different mechanisms, so separately from the use of RTB (1-4-1) receipts, other key additional potential delivery routes for new Council Housing are:

Planning process and planning obligations as set out under Objective 3 where the Council becomes the affordable home owner and manages this within our HRA.

Homes England Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26. This provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing. Under this programme the grant requested cannot be higher than it would be for Affordable Rent which means if we wished to provide Social Rent properties then the Council will have to bridge the gap.

Other ad-hoc schemes may also support part of the cost of building new Council houses, for example contribution to brownfield development or carbon reduction costs.

1.18 The Council has recently published a 5-year build programme which sets out how it proposes to use known and anticipated 1-4-1 receipts from the sale of existing Council houses under Right to Buy Provisions (RTB). This programme was developed and updated in light of the recent revisions to the use of 1-4-1 RTB receipts by the Government.

This now allows us to utilise receipts over a 5-year period (up from 3-years) with pooling available over a yearly period (up from quarterly) and increasing the cap on the cost of a replacement home that can be met from RTB receipts to 40% (up from 30%).

- 1.19 As a registered Social Housing Provider we are responsible for maintaining a sustainable HRA over a rolling 30-year period. This means we are able to maintain, refurbish and replace our existing stock and related infrastructure and replace houses lost to RTB. As a result we must undertake prudent borrowing decisions against the overall HRA and its liabilities in order to bridge the remaining 60% gap in the cost of a replacement home. This may also limit our overall ability to borrow responsibly in order to bridge any other gap in funding for social housing delivered through any of the additional mechanisms outlined above.
- 1.20 How and where we procure and deliver new Council Housing can be done in several ways and the benefits of each will be weighed up and assessed on a business case basis for each site. Options include:
- Open market tender where the Principal Contractor could either be a third-party commercial developer, the Council's own development company (3 Rivers), another local authority development company or a partnership approach
  - Direct award to a Principal Contractor through a relevant procurement framework – in particular this may be used for modular build projects
  - Direct award to a 'Teckal' company set up by the Council or another contracting authority. Such a company benefits from contracts for works, services or supply from its controlling Contracting Authority (or Authorities) without having to go through a competitive tender process
  - Direct delivery through the Council's own building services team within its One Housing service – in particular this may be appropriate for smaller schemes.

The types of schemes vary, for example:

- Brownfield or greenfield developments on market or HRA/Council own land. Examples of the latter include redundant garage plots and infill sites within the control of the Council
- Infill, remodelling, acquisitions including buy back properties, modular schemes, minor and major schemes.



**Objective 5 – Retain a viable Council Housing stock baseline of a minimum 3,000 properties through full use of available Right to Buy (RTB) 1-4-1 receipts**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor the number of social rent delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Deliver 60 new Council homes between 21- 25 and a further 20 by 2027</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>5-year 1-4-1 programme 2021-25, Corporate Plan 2020 – 24</b>  |

**Objective 6 – Grow the Mid Devon Council Housing stock beyond baseline through additional, non 1-4-1 mechanisms.**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Target -</b> | <b>Deliver 70 new Council homes between 21 – 23 and additional 15 homes per annum thereafter to 2025</b>   |
|                 | <b>How measured – Monitor the number of social rent and affordable homes delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock</b> |
| <b>Source -</b> | <b>Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024</b>  |

Objective 5 is additional homes specifically provided for the Mid Devon Council stock and not counted in Objective 3, which will be properties owned/managed by private, profit or not-for-profit housing associations and other registered providers, but otherwise may still be available through the Devon Home Choice allocations process.

**Overall, objectives 5 and 6 aim to provide 160 new Council houses by 2025 of a mix of social and affordable rent.**

***Meeting housing needs of rural communities***

1.21 While the substantial proportion of earmarked housing development is focused at the three main towns of Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton, the district is predominantly rural, with a population scattered across a large number of villages. The continued vibrancy of the rural areas is very much linked to the ability of those villages to provide a source of housing and local employment, shops and community facilities as a hub for social activity. Local Plan policies provide an opportunity for some limited development at identified villages across the district meeting local needs appropriate to their individual opportunities. This includes the allocation of some sites for housing and also providing scope for new homes on 'exceptions sites' within or adjoining village boundaries. The Local Plan also provides scope for some forms of development outside villages in the countryside, including affordable and low cost housing to meet local needs, gypsy and traveller accommodation, residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings, replacement dwellings, housing to accommodate a rural

worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling. However, new isolated homes will be avoided in the countryside. The preparation of a new Local Plan for Mid Devon will provide an opportunity to re-appraise the role of villages and functional relationships between them and the rural areas in which they are located through the gathering of new evidence.

- 1.22 While the preparation of a Local Housing Needs Assessment (formerly 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment') will look in detail at housing need across the district there is a continued opportunity for surveys of housing need to be undertaken at parish level. These can be carried out by the Devon Rural Housing Partnership and supported through funding from the Council in locations where there may be potential for rural housing schemes through policies in the Local Plan. The parish surveys of housing need can help inform the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and community led housing schemes.

### **Objective 7 – Understand housing need in rural areas**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Parish surveys of local housing need</b>                         |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>3 surveys each year</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Partnership working with the Devon Rural Housing Partnership</b> |

- 1.23 Community led housing schemes can play an important role in bringing forward sites to provide affordable new homes for local people, where those sites may typically be small, have specific delivery issues and be of no interest to developers. They can be instrumental in helping to empower local communities to shape their area and for people to continue to live where otherwise they may be forced to move away because of a lack of affordable housing opportunities. Community led housing schemes can be a means to secure properties that will continue to remain affordable in perpetuity through the use of S106 legal planning agreements. Such schemes can bring a number of other benefits, including support for smaller-scale building companies and local suppliers, providing an opportunity to raise design standards, energy efficiency and opportunities for modern methods of construction and for people to be directly involved in the building or commissioning the building of their own home.

- 1.24 In addition to on-line sources of information (for example, <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/community-led-housing-toolkit>) Community groups can seek support from the Council, which can include:

- Land use planning and other technical advice
- Potential financial support through the Community Led Housing Fund and the Section 106 affordable housing funds

- The Devon Rural Housing Partnership, which is a partnership of Local Authorities and Housing Associations and which commissions Devon Communities Together (experts in rural housing enabling).

- 1.25 In 2016 the Council was awarded £131,359 through the Government's Community Housing Fund, which is ring-fenced to help support local communities with housing projects across the district. This can be achieved through working in partnership with community groups (including Community Land Trusts), registered providers, landowners and other stakeholders
- 1.26 There are currently two 'live' community led housing schemes in Mid Devon at Chawleigh and at Sampford Peverell. The recent appointment of a Housing Enabling officer will build capacity for the Council to provide increased support to communities wishing to bring forward housing schemes in their areas.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Objective 8 -</b>  | <b>Support community led housing schemes</b>   |
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Assist Community Land Trust through the Community Led Housing Fund</b>                                |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>1 Community Land Trust provided grant funding each year, subject to assessment criteria being met</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 / Mid Devon KPI 26</b>   |

### ***Raising building design standards – accessibility, design quality and climate change***

- 1.27 National planning policy makes clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and creates better places in which to live and work. The Local Plan policies S1 and DM1 set out the Council's policies for achieving good design in the district and these are supported through the Mid Devon Design Guide that was adopted by the Council in October 2020.
- 1.28 The Mid Devon Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) outlines that the proportion of people aged over 60 is likely to increase significantly over the next 20 years. The District's aging population will give rise to the need for proposals for elderly person's accommodation including sheltered accommodation, care homes and nursing homes. Indeed, the projected growth of the 65+ population in Mid Devon between 2013 and 2033 is expected to increase by +54.3%. This equates to approximately 9,366 more people aged 65+ by 2033. Mid Devon is projected to have the highest increase in older people in the Exeter Housing Market Area, with a 54.3% increase in the population aged 65+ between 2012-33 (the average across Exeter HMA authorities being +44.4%) and an 81.8% increase in people aged 75+ over the plan period.

- 1.29 In general terms, care and support needs increase with age. However, more people are staying in their properties longer with support and care being supplied by external agents in their home. The latest census (March 2011) indicated that approximately 7% (5,792) of Mid Devon's population (77,750) were limited a lot in their day to day activities and 10% (7,708) were limited a little in their day to day activities due to a long term health problem or disability. Furthermore, data from the Council's 'Authority's Monitoring Report' (2018) highlights that approximately 20.3% of households in Mid Devon include a member with a disability and only 9.7% of the housing stock is comprised of adapted households.
- 1.30 Given that future demographic changes will inevitably result in greater demands for housing suitable for older people and those with disabilities, there is a clear need to improve accessibility standards in new homes. This is required through Local Plan Policy DM1 criterion (i) which stipulates that on sites of 10 dwellings or more the provision of 20% of dwellings built to Level 2 of Building Regulations Part M (access to and use of new dwellings). As the Government's Future Homes standard is brought into force the Council, through its Local Authority Building Control Service, will implement part L of the Building Regulations to achieve relevant energy performance in new development and any revision to the standards towards carbon zero.

### **Objective 9 – Improve accessibility standards in new homes**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor annual completions on major sites (10 or more dwellings) to be built to Level 2 of Building Regulations Part M (access to and use of new dwellings)</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>20%</b>   |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan</b>  |

### **Objective 10 – Improve design quality in new homes**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor number of appeals allowed where planning permission has been refused due to poor quality design</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>0</b>   |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan / Design Guide</b>   |

- 1.31 The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. We have agreed to work to the Devon-wide target of 2050, but will aim for Mid Devon to become carbon neutral by a more ambitious date of 2030. This means we must consider the sustainability of all new homes we directly deliver, both through climate impact and their resilience to climate change.

## **Objective 11 – Improve the climate change sustainability and resilience of new Council Housing**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor % of properties that meet defined net-carbon zero and other standards (e.g. Passivhaus)</b>                      |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>100% of all new build Council homes to be net-carbon zero by 2025 and meet a defined comfort and energy use standard</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Climate Strategy and Action Plan</b>   |

### ***Preventing homelessness and supporting priority households***

1.32 The Council has an adopted homelessness prevention and rough sleeping strategy for the period 2020-2025. This can be viewed in full here:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/>

1.33 The Covid pandemic has brought about a major change to the way in which our Housing Options team manages approaches by those who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless, and the increased demand on our service.

1.34 At the time of developing this Housing Strategy, the full economic impact of the pandemic is yet to be felt. However, it is widely anticipated that there will be a further increase in numbers of people approaching local authorities for assistance due to potential or actual homelessness. This may be due to employment issues arising once the furlough scheme ends when householders can no longer afford their mortgage or rental costs; or other reasons including the loss of homes in the private sector where landlords can no longer afford to service their buy to let mortgages or need to repossess their property for their own personal use.

1.35 The Government has also introduced various regulations to limit evictions during the pandemic, but as this has eased then this may add further pressures on our service.

1.36 To respond to this, we have focused on delivering the four strategic aims of our homelessness prevention and rough sleeping strategy:

- Minimising rough sleeping
- Maximising prevention activities and outcomes
- Increasing accommodation options
- Improving health and wellbeing by supporting those with complex needs

1.37 During the pandemic, particular focus has been on tackling rough sleeping and increasing accommodation options with a specific emphasis on effectively utilising **23**

central Government funding (from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – MHCLG), including our successful Navigator project in partnership with East Devon District Council.

- 1.38 Moving forward we will continue to focus on each of these priorities equally. This strategy therefore seeks to mirror this key work in progress and set out the following objectives under each preventing homelessness priority.

### **Objective 12 – Minimising rough sleeping**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Successful applications for external funding streams including MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative, on-going Navigator projects delivery and development of our night shelter accommodation during the winter months</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>5 or less rough sleepers within Mid Devon at any one time</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</b>  |

### **Objective 13 – Maximising prevention activities and outcomes**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Working with the Housing Options Accommodation Officer to facilitate or provide support for all households at risk of homelessness and ensure there is sufficient temporary or emergency accommodation available to all priority households</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>90% of all temporary or emergency accommodation for priority households provided within the district / putting in place support to help tenants to sustain their tenancies where appropriate</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</b>   |

### **Objective 14 – Increasing accommodation options**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Work with the Planning Service and through this wider strategy to deliver more affordable accommodation, review Deposit and Advance Rent Scheme (DARS) and promote and work with Public Health private sector housing officers and private sector to increase good quality private sector accommodation</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>See Objectives 3 – 5 and affordable housing, review DARS scheme by 2022 and integration of the Housing Options team with Public Health from August 2021</b>   |

**Source - Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**

**Objective 15 – Improving health and wellbeing by supporting those with complex needs**

**How measured - Supporting those at risk of/experiencing domestic abuse and wider vulnerable groups at risk of homelessness, build relationships with local GPs and other support services and making appropriate referrals and developing protocols of working with partner agencies**

**Target - Develop delivery plan for Domestic Abuse Act Tier 2 capacity funding 2021/22/membership of Devon Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, ongoing engagement with other fora including MARAC (Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse), Early Help, Safeguarding and TAF (Team Around the Family) and the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**

**Source - Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, East & Mid Devon CSP Action Plan 2021/22**

***Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople provision***

1.39 National planning policy makes clear the requirement for Local Authorities to assess the need for traveller sites and to plan for these sites in a sustainable manner over a reasonable timescale. There is also a legal requirement placed on Local Authorities through the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. Compliance with the duties may involve treating some persons more favourably than others. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as separate racial groups through the Equality Act 2010 and these groups are protected from discrimination by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on Local Authorities to promote race equality. It is in this context of national planning policy and legal duties that Local Authorities have a responsibility to develop fair and effective strategies to meet the housing needs of travellers through the identification of land for sites.

1.40 The Mid Devon Local Plan allocates sites for Gypsies and Travellers as part of sustainable planned urban extensions at Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, that will provide for at least 25 pitches, and sets out policies (i.e Policy DM7) for sites coming forward on private sites in suitable locations elsewhere in the district. This is in response to

**25**



the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment 2015 (GTAA) which has identified a need between 2014 – 2034 for 35 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 11 plots for Travelling Showpeople.

A new GTAA will be prepared in 2021 which will be used to help inform the preparation of a new Local Plan for Mid Devon.

- 1.41 When planning permission is granted for a Gypsy or Traveller site, often this is subject to one or more conditions to make the development acceptable in planning terms. This can include restricting the occupancy of the site to a specific family, and not allowing occupancy by other Gypsies or Travellers. The housing needs of households can change over time and this could lead to circumstances where existing pitches on sites may become vacant, or where additional pitches may be needed. It is recognised there is a need for the Council to understand where the occupancy of pitches on existing sites in Mid Devon may have changed and where there may be opportunities on existing sites to bring vacant pitches back into use, or space for new pitches to meet the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Mid Devon. These opportunities will need to be looked at further in terms of whether the site is suitable in planning terms, what occupancy restriction is justified and necessary, and would be subject to planning permission being granted and compliance with other relevant legislation.
- 1.42 Travelling showpeople have their own requirements for sites ('yards') to provide homes and also to accommodate vehicles and equipment. No new sites have yet been identified for travelling showpeople in Mid Devon.
- 1.43 The Council will work with landowners, developers, registered providers and the travelling community to identify and bring forward opportunities in the district that can help secure the delivery of new sites and pitches to provide homes for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Council runs a Forum for Gypsies and Travellers in Mid Devon which provides an opportunity to discuss the provision of pitches in the district, welfare needs and other matters of interest to the travelling community.
- 1.44 The Council maintains a waiting list for Gypsy and Traveller households to register their need for a pitch in Mid Devon. Although there is no public travellers site or pitches that are currently available in Mid Devon the waiting list can be used to help keep the Council better informed of current need and also in developing a policy for the future allocation of pitches once these become available on sites allocated in the Local Plan.
- 1.45 Councils in Devon are currently exploring the potential for establishing one or more negotiated stopping sites across the county, which can help avoid unauthorised



encampments. A negotiated stopping site can be a means to provide a managed approach to Gypsies and Travellers who have a connection to the area, but who only require a pitch provision for short periods of time each year and are travelling the remainder of the year. One or more such sites could be made available at short notice with the agreement of the landowner and would be preferable to unauthorised encampments on the roadside, in car parks or other sensitive land such as areas of public open space and playing fields. The Council has recently completed a 'call for sites' for its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which will be used to inform the preparation of a new Local Plan for Mid Devon. The Council will review submissions received to explore where there may be potential opportunities for identifying a suitable negotiated stopping site and will work with landowners and their agents to help bring a site forward where this may be acceptable in planning terms and where satisfactory management arrangements can be agreed and put in place. This may include engagement with the both the local travelling and settled communities.

## **Objective 16 – Meet the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Delivery of new pitches</b>                |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>8 pitches between 2021 - 2025</b>          |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan /Mid Devon KPI 32</b> |

### ***Modern methods of construction***

1.46 The Council recognises that Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) can provide a wide range of benefits including faster construction, higher environmental standards and reduced costs compared to traditional building techniques. It is considered that MMC can help diversify the housing offer across Mid Devon, aiding affordability and sustainable design. The Town and Country Planning Association outlines a number of benefits and challenges associated with MMC as follows:

#### Benefits

- Speed of delivery
- Amenity during construction
- Build cost
- Build quality
- Environmental performance
- Sustainability

#### Challenges

- Evidence of durability
- Procurement
- Integrating planning and MMC

- Funding and mortgage availability
- Place-making and design concerns

1.47 Modern Methods of Construction encompasses a wide range of construction techniques, all of which differ from 'traditional' building methods. Research undertaken by the National House Building Council (NHBC) Foundation defines MMC as including the following approaches:

- Volumetric (modular) manufactured units
- Pods (particularly bathroom and kitchen)
- Panelised systems (including open and closed panel timber frame systems, open and closed panel steel frame panels, structural insulated panels (SIPS), cross-laminated timber (CLT))
- Sub-assemblies and components (including door sets, timber I-beams, prefabricated chimneys, prefabricated dormers, floor cassettes, roof cassettes)
- Site-based MMC (including thin-joint masonry and insulated structural framework (ICF)).

1.48 The Council is keen to support a wide range of MMC and their implementation within Mid Devon, and the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 encourages the piloting of MMC in Mid Devon. The Council will also seek to engage with the development industry and its strategic partners to identify and pilot opportunities in the district. The preparation of a new Local Plan will provide an opportunity for new policy to support MMC. The TCPA recommends other measures including raising awareness and understanding of MMC and investigating opportunities for MMC on Council owned sites.

## Objective 17 – Pilot modern methods of construction (MMC)

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Number of MMC development schemes in the district</b>         |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>4 schemes granted planning permission between 2021 - 2025</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024</b>                                |

## Custom and Self-Build

1.49 The Government wants to enable more people to build their own home. Currently, only 8% of new homes are built in this way in the UK, but this form of custom and self-build housing is growing in popularity. The Council recognises the benefits of custom and self-build in meeting the housing needs of Mid Devon residents. Custom and self-build is also more likely to draw upon local tradespeople and suppliers, supporting the local economy.

Source: Delivering Custom and Self Build Housing Developments in your community.

- 1.50 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires that the Council keeps a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the Mid Devon area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding. The Mid Devon Self Build Register was established in April 2016. The Act also places two land duties on the Council; the 'duty to grant planning permission etc' and the 'duty as regards registers'. Fundamentally, the 'duty to grant planning permission etc' requires Mid Devon District Council to give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to the Council's register during a base period. At the end of each base period, the Council has 3 years in which to give permission to an equivalent number of plots of land, which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding, as there are entries for that base period. The second land duty, 'duty as regards registers' requires the Council to have regard to the register when carrying out its planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions.
- 1.51 The Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2033 includes a number of policies to support the delivery of custom and self-build. Policy S3 parts c) and d) stipulate:
- c) To support self-build and custom dwellings meeting the needs of local communities, such dwellings will be permitted as affordable housing in locations outside settlement limits in accordance with Policy DM6;
  - d) To support self-build and custom housing on sites of 20 dwellings or more; developers will supply at least 5% of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self-builders for a period of 12 months per plot and any plots subsequently developed for self-build must be completed within 3 years of purchase by a self-builder.
- 1.52 The Council will prepare and adopt a Custom and Self-Build SPD to provide more detailed guidance to support the implementation of the Local Plan policies. The SPD will provide an opportunity to identify how custom and self-build homes can harness low energy design and energy construction.
- 1.53 The Council will work with individuals, local communities, landowners and developers to raise awareness of custom and self-build.
- 1.54 The Council will investigate opportunities for community-led custom and self-build when supporting community groups.

**Objective 18 - Facilitate the delivery of serviced plots for custom and self-build housing**

**How measured -** Monitor serviced plots granted planning permission  
**Target -** Minimum 20 serviced plots between 2021 - 2025  
**Source -** Mid Devon Local Plan / Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 / Mid Devon KPI 31

**Objective 19 - Support custom and self-build**

**How measured -** Prepare detailed guidance in a Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document  
**Target -** Adopt Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document – spring 2022  
**Source -** Mid Devon Local Plan / Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Strategic Housing Priority 2: Optimise existing housing - fit for purpose healthy, sustainable, adaptable homes optimised for high energy efficiency and low carbon impact**

There are 8 objectives within this strategic priority:

#### ***Plan and support for future health needs***

Objective 20 – Identifying needs and trends

Objective 21 – Supporting specific needs

Objective 22 – Housing Assistance Policy (Better Care Fund)

Objective 23 – Adapting for neuro-diversity in social housing

Objective 24 – Improving air quality at existing residential locations in Air Quality Management Areas

#### ***Market conditions for local builders and related small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)***

Objective 25 - Support local housebuilders

#### ***Climate change and existing housing***

Objective 26 – Climate change and existing Council housing stock

Objective 27 – Climate change and existing private housing stock

### 2.0 Optimise

2.1 The Council wants to meet the housing needs of all communities and the challenges of an ageing population. This Strategy aims to promote the best use of current housing stock, whatever the tenure, and further enable new housing that is built to a standard that will enhance the health and wellbeing of future occupants.

#### ***Plan and support for future health needs***

2.2 We plan to meet future health needs in a variety of ways:

- Work collaboratively with providers to respond to a need for extra care facilities
- Ensure new affordable housing for older people adequately meets future needs (including mobility needs and issues such as dementia), in locations close to local amenities and of a design and type that is attractive to older people
- Encourage the development of energy efficient affordable homes to reduce carbon emissions and reduce household heating costs

- Enable wheelchair standard accommodation on new housing developments in line with adopted planning policy requirements to actively increase the stock of this type of affordable housing
- Optimise matching of adapted housing stock to those most in need through a Disabled Adapted Needs Panel
- Promote housing development to include adequate natural spaces and tree planting

2.3 To support this there are several specific objectives:

### **Objective 20 – Identifying needs and trends**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Interrogate new 2021 Census data and the existing Devon Home Choice (DHC) register to predict future housing trends and needs</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Establish significant areas of interest by Dec 2021 ready for overlay with the new data in 2022</b>                               |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>2021 Census/DHC Register</b>  |

### **Objective 21 – Supporting specific needs**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Ongoing support and development of key support services and provision</b>  |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Continued support 2021-25 for the Council's Lifeline alarm service, membership of Devon Home Choice social housing allocations scheme with specified provision for adaptations and work with Devon County Council to provide specialist adapted and independent living accommodation</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Housing Assistance Policy 2019, Devon Housing and Accommodation Strategy 2020-25 and Tenancy Strategy</b>  |

### **Objective 22 – Housing Assistance Policy (Better Care Fund)**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Promote and deliver against updated Housing Assistance Policy</b>  |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Updated policy for 2022-25 covering disabled facilities grants, accessible and healthy homes, home improvement loans, debt support and affordable warmth/energy efficiency support</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Housing Assistance Policy 2019, Better Care Fund (BCF) and Devon Housing and Accommodation Strategy 2020-25</b>  |

### **Objective 23 – Adapting for neuro-diversity in social housing**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>We will identify and adopt new standards for our new Council Housing and consider retrofit where possible in respect of neuro-diversity needs including dementia/related conditions, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and mental health conditions such as obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Work with Devon County Council to develop and pilot a draft neuro-diversity standard for social housing by 2022</b>   |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Better Care Fund and Devon Housing and Accommodation Strategy 2020-25</b>   |

- 2.4 We can also optimise the quality of our existing housing in areas where residential properties are exposed to poor air quality. This is a significant public health issue which can shorten lives, reduce quality of life and cause serious illness. Tackling local pollution will therefore improve the future health prospects of those living in affected areas. The town centre areas of both Cridton and Cullompton have been formally declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where we have a duty to improve local pollution concentrations at locations where they are most impactful.
- 2.5 This strategy therefore interlinks with our formal Air Quality Action Planning and the following objective.

### **Objective 24 – Improving air quality at existing residential locations in Air Quality Management Areas**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Update and adopt a new Air Quality Action Plan for Cridton and Cullompton AQMAs by the end of 2021</b>           |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Various specific measures and targets set out in the Action Plan with and overall delivery period of 2021-25</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Air Quality Annual Status Report 2020</b>  |

- 2.6 We will also update our existing Supplementary Planning Document on Air Quality during 2021-22 in order to assess the impact of new development on existing accommodation, but also to protect new development from exposure to unacceptably high local pollution levels over air quality limit values.

***Market conditions for local builders and related small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)***

- 2.7 Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of the district.
- 2.8 The adopted Local Plan allocates a range of different sized sites for housing across the district, including 19 sites below 1 hectare with potential for a combined minimum of 270 homes. This is less than 4% of the total housing requirement in the local plan.
- 2.9 National planning policy now requires the Council to accommodate at least 10% of its housing requirement on sites no larger than 1 hectare, which will be reflected through the preparation of a new Local Plan for the district.
- 2.10 Increasing the provision of smaller sites will benefit local builders and SMEs by helping to provide more opportunities to access suitable land for development, and reduce reliance on larger sites which may be dominated by national volume house builders. It can also help to diversify the housing market through an increased number of outlets and choice of house types, help foster innovation, boost productivity and includes sites that are capable of being built out relatively quickly and which can increase housing supply. There are also likely to be benefits to the local economy in terms of jobs and the use of suppliers. Diversifying the housing market, for example through making provision for custom and self-builders, offers the potential for significant local benefits to the Mid Devon economy, as well as supporting local builders and SMEs. A survey of SME housebuilding firms indicates, "52% have built new homes in the last year to the plans and specification of the homeowner (custom and self-build)".
- 2.11 Research undertaken for Mid Devon District Council in late 2019 (Analysis of the economic benefits of self-build and custom housebuilding to the local economy Chamberlain Walker Economics Ltd) estimated that 45 pence in every £ invested in custom and self-build (CSB) homes is spent locally, double the estimated 22 pence in every £ invested by mainstream housebuilders. In addition, 65% of CSB labour is local (including the economic value of DIY labour). This is higher than the estimated 43% of major housebuilder labour that is local.
- 2.12 Custom and Self-Builders and SME builders rely heavily on builder's merchants – either national companies, but with local branches employing local people.
- 2.13 Smaller sites may also be more attractive to community led housing groups and people wishing to commission or build their own home. Where the Council will bring land forward for housing development this can provide an opportunity to partner with



one or more SME housebuilders, including housebuilders local to the district. In this regard, the Council's own development company (3 Rivers) may be a conduit to local SME builders, trades and merchants.

### **Objective 25 - Support local housebuilders**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Number of SME house builders supported</b>  |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Subdivision of at least 1 site greater than 1 hectare for smaller builders. Partner with at least one SME housebuilder on a Council development site (market or social housing)</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon Local Plan / National Planning Policy Framework / Housing Revenue Account</b>   |

### ***Climate change and existing housing***

- 2.14 The challenges to the district noted in the introduction of this Strategy include reference that the Council has also declared a Climate Emergency and all new policy and strategy documents will need to be set against our low carbon and other environmental priorities. We are working with all Devon local authorities to a County wide target of 2050, aiming for Mid Devon District Council to achieve Net Zero by a more ambitious date of 2030, and supporting Mid Devon communities to reach Net Zero.
- 2.15 Chapter one considers design standards and methods of construction for new housing, but we must consider how we can optimise our own housing stock across all ownership and tenure within the district. In this regard, we therefore set out the following objectives to help us address this climate emergency.

### **Objective 26 – Climate change and existing Council housing stock**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Retrofit, refurbish and update our existing stock to a net zero carbon standard</b>   |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Ensure 15% of our existing stock (2021 baseline) meets net carbon standard by 2030 and all stock by 2050. This can be delivered through capital works investment via the rolling 30-year Housing Revenue Account maintenance fund and through successful bids into national grant schemes (e.g. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) with off-setting if required</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020-2024 / Climate Strategy / Climate Action Plan / Housing Revenue Account</b>   |

**Objective 27 – Climate change and existing private housing stock**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Encourage the retrofit, refurbishment and update our existing private sector stock to a low carbon standard</b>  |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Support the delivery of the Energy Company Obligation – Flexibility Eligibility (ECO-Flex) scheme 2021-22 with a target of 250 Local Authority Declarations (LADs) annually.<br/>Support for/bids into other national schemes including; Home Upgrade (HUG) Schemes, Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) compliance and enforcement funding, as well as the Devon County Council Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme Local Authority Delivery Scheme round 3 (LAD 3)</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020-2024 / Climate Strategy / Climate Action Plan / BEIS and MHCLG</b>   |

## CHAPTER THREE

### Strategic Housing Priority 3: Make - making the most of our existing homes across private and public sector in all forms of tenure

There are 11 objectives within this strategic priority:

#### ***Ensure the best use and improved quality of existing housing***

Objective 28 – Empty Homes Plan

Objective 29 – Empty Dwelling Management Orders

Objective 30 – Key workers

Objective 31 – Tenancy Strategy (Council Housing)

Objective 32 – Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

#### ***Working with the private sector***

Objective 33 – Private sector housing standards

Objective 34 – Private sector landlord engagement and support

Objective 35 – Private sector accommodation and homelessness

#### ***Making the best use of privately owned and occupied homes***

Objective 36 – Home Improvement Loans and debt consolidation

Objective 37 – Home Improvement Loans delivery

Objective 38 – Better Care Fund

### 3.0 Make

#### ***Ensure the best use and improved quality of existing housing***

- 3.1 Managing and improving the quality of the existing stock of more than 35,000 properties in all forms of ownership and tenure is important. Placed alongside improving our neighbourhoods, this has a direct impact on our communities – on their health, well-being, education, prosperity and safety.
- 3.2 The latest English Housing Survey Headline Report for 2019-20 was published in December 2020. The report identifies that the percentage of private rented homes has stabilised for the last two years at 19% of the housing stock. This report does not break the data down into local area, but the profile for Mid Devon on the Office of National Statistics site (ONS) states that the level of private renting in Mid Devon is 15.5%.

- 3.3 The ONS figures are based on 2011 Census data, so comparing this to the English Housing survey for 2010-11, the national average for the private rented sector was 16.5%. Therefore the level of private renting in the area is slightly under the national average at that time. Based on this comparison it is fairly safe to assume that given the rise of 2.5% nationally in the last 10 years, the level of private rented in Mid Devon will have increased also to around 18%.
- 3.4 The new census for 2021 will provide a more accurate account of local data once published.
- 3.5 The private rented sector has overtaken the level of social rented accommodation which currently stands at 17% nationally, making the private rented sector critical for the housing of local residents.
- 3.6 We can deliver on this overarching objective through a wide range of inter-linked activities as set out below:
- Encouraging long-term empty homes back into use
  - Develop proactive relationships and work collaboratively with Registered Providers for mutual benefit
  - Embed and implement a new Tenancy Strategy
  - Encourage tenants in social housing to downsize
  - Work with our partners to seek re-development opportunities to enhance the current housing stock and to meet the needs of residents
  - Work with our Registered Provider partners to identify and improve issues in their stock; to deliver low cost aids and adaptations in their housing stock to support their tenants; and develop improvements in the recording and identification of adapted units within the existing affordable housing stock
  - Promote and support energy efficiency in homes
  - Ensure the private rented sector meets the requirements of The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations
  - Develop a Fuel Poverty Action Plan that will incorporate closer working with partner organisations, that pool knowledge and resources to ensure that fuel poor residents receive support; target wards which have higher fuel poverty rates than the regional average; target all F & G energy performance rated properties
  - Develop and promote an intermediate housing register specifically for key workers with supply from the private rented sector and property developed by the Council
  - Monitor and actively promote high standards in the rented sector and take appropriate action where standards are not being met to tackle disrepair, poor housing conditions and criminal/rogue landlords

- Support and encourage new, high quality and well managed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the local area, including offering a management service ourselves, whilst licensing all HMOs that are subject to mandatory licensing
- Deliver private rented sector Landlords' & Letting Agents' Forums and other networking opportunities for private landlords; promoting the events widely and using them to consult the private rented sector on the issues that are affecting them
- Support tenants and stand firm in situations where landlords attempt retaliatory evictions
- Work with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods.

3.7 Many of these activities are linked to our core duty as a registered provider as well as being a regulator of private sector housing. Nonetheless, to support this are several specific objectives:

#### **Objective 28 – Empty Homes Plan**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Promote and deliver against updated Empty Homes Plan</b>   |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Building on the successful first empty homes plan with updated plan for 2022-25 and an annual target of bringing 72 homes back into use annually</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Empty Homes Plan 2019 - 21</b>   |

#### **Objective 29 – Empty Dwelling Management Orders**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Review the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders as a tool for bringing homes back into use</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Review completed by 2021</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Empty Homes Plan 2019 - 21 and updated plan 2022 - 25</b>   |

#### **Objective 30 – Key workers**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Review development of an intermediate housing register specifically for key workers with supply from the private rented sector and property developed by the Council</b>                                |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Review practicalities and potential benefits of a Key Workers register by 2022 with possible link into Devon Home Choice (social housing) and private sector rentals for allocations to Key Workers</b> |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Covid-19 recovery response/National Housing Federation and MHCLG</b>  |

### Objective 31 – Tenancy Strategy

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| How measured - | Promote and deliver against updated Tenancy Strategy. The strategy will include an aim to a shared database/data sharing arrangement with our registered provider and other partners to highlight issues and look at trends around stock condition, Decent Homes Standard and wider neighbourhood and anti-social behaviour issues. This will also be reviewed against the emerging Government social housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures |
| Target -       | Strategy updated and adopted by 2023   |
| Source -       | Tenancy Strategy/Government Social Housing White Paper 2020  |

### Objective 32 – Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| How measured - | Support and encourage new, high quality and well managed Houses in Multiple Occupation in the local area, including review of offering a management service ourselves. Inspect all potential HMOs whilst licensing all that are subject to mandatory licensing and/or take relevant enforcement action against non-compliant landlords |
| Target -       | 100% of potential HMO properties assessed. Review option of an MDDC management service by 2022. Ongoing target of all HMOs to meet license conditions and management regulations   |
| Source -       | Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024/HMO KPI/East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership   |

### *Working with the private sector*

- 3.8 The Council's private sector housing function sits within the Public Health and Housing Options Service. This team has the core aim to help improve the health, safety and welfare of residents living in the private sector across the district of Mid Devon.
- 3.9 The team follows a robust and transparent approach rather than an informal route to ensure there is a level playing field amongst landlords in the sector and all landlords are treated in the same way. This includes a formal inspection and assessment and appropriate enforcement action is taken if necessary. This makes it clear and transparent for all involved on the type of service to expect.

- 3.10 This approach was introduced in 2017 and has had the effect of improving private sector homes in a timely manner and on average the team serves 65 improvement notices a year.
- 3.11 This approach to the private rented sector not only improves the health and safety of the home for the tenants, but also prevents homelessness by ensuring there is adequate and appropriate housing available, particularly given that social housing stock is in high demand.
- 3.12 Alongside enforcement action, the team undertake a number of activities to try and engage landlords and encourage them to self-regulate. The introduction of the Landlord Networking Event in 2017 aimed to treat landlords professionally and provide the knowledge and tools they needed to improve their own properties. The success of the event has meant that it has been an annual occurrence and has led to additional ideas for engagement.
- 3.13 Landlords can sign up to a notification service called 'Pin Point' that provides bite sized information on legislative changes as well as schemes and/or grants that could be relevant to the sector. In addition, the team have experimented with online training sessions for landlords and this is an area that needs further work and promotion.
- 3.14 Finally, the team is currently reviewing the idea of a landlord registration scheme. So far only a handful of landlords have signed up to the idea so this is another area for further development.
- 3.15 Engagement with the Council is important for ensuring the private rented sector is safe and functions effectively. It is also important for building the relationship between the Council and landlords so that they can approach us for advice, but equally understand that where enforcement action is taken it is fair and equitable.

### **Objective 33 – Private sector housing standards**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Monitor and actively promote high standards in the private rented sector and take appropriate action where standards are not being met, to tackle disrepair, poor housing conditions and criminal/rogue landlords</b>   |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Ensure 95% of service requests are actioned within service standards/monitor and evaluate trends of service delivery and enforcement outcomes annually to develop a rolling programme of effective engagement with private sector landlords to reduce the level of Category 1 hazards identified across the private rented housing stock. In serious cases,</b> |

**Source -** use banning orders and add landlords to the national rogue landlord database  
Corporate Plan 2020-2024/HMO KPI/East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership/Housing Act 2004 and Housing and Planning Act 2016

**Objective 34 – Private sector landlord engagement and support**

**How measured -** Undertake specific activities to engage, guide and advise private sector residential landlords  
**Target -** 9 engagement activities annually including the annual landlord networking event, 'Pin Point' e-newsletter and webinars or specific events  
**Source -** Mid Devon KPI CP – PSH - 08

- 3.16 As set out above, the aim to engage with landlords is considered a priority for this strategy and we intend to build on this. Not only in relation to the condition of the property, but also to encourage landlords to work with us in respect of preventing homelessness and providing alternative accommodation.
- 3.17 In 2011 The Localism Act allowed for councils to use the private rented sector to discharge its homelessness duty as an alternative to using B&B/Hostels/Hotels. This recognises that council owned accommodation and the hospitality sector alone cannot meet the potential homeless and temporary or emergency accommodation needs alone and private sector landlords have a key role in meeting any gap. Although available as an option, it is not often used due to the lack of engagement from private sector landlords and the fear of coming under scrutiny in respect of enforcement and housing conditions.
- 3.17 Better engagement and working relationships with landlords would greatly improve the availability of private rented accommodation as a housing and homelessness option. A further objective for this strategy therefore is to continue to build on our engagement and to identify ways to encourage landlords to work with us more closely in this respect. The recent move of our dedicated Housing Options and Homeless Team into the Council's Public Health team will also facilitate closer working with Private Sector housing colleagues to help deliver this objective.

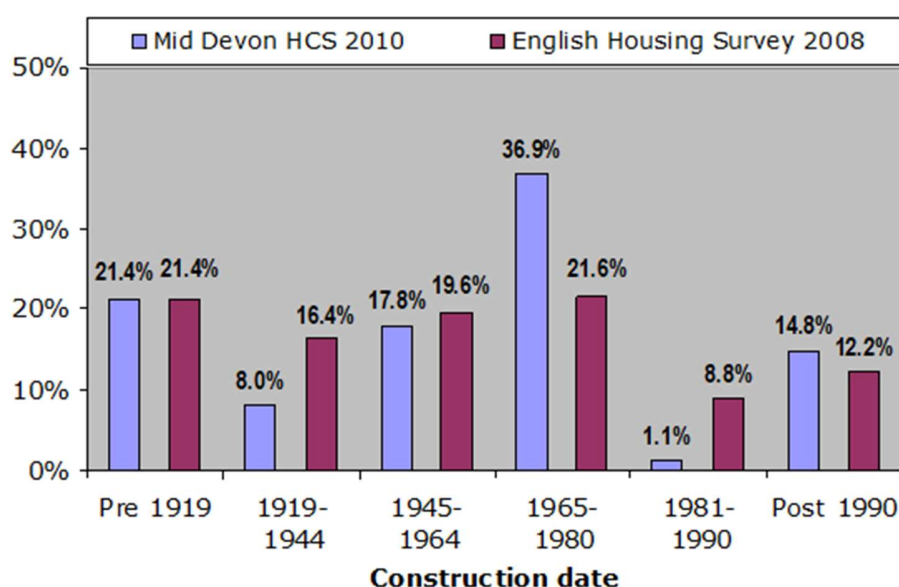


**Objective 35 – Private sector accommodation and homelessness**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Use opportunities for engagement developed through Objective 32 to specifically increase the availability of private sector rented accommodation as a homelessness option</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>4 activities within Objective 31 to specifically target options for homelessness accommodation in this sector</b>   |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon KPI CP – PSH – 08 and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</b>   |

***Making the best use of privately owned and occupied homes***

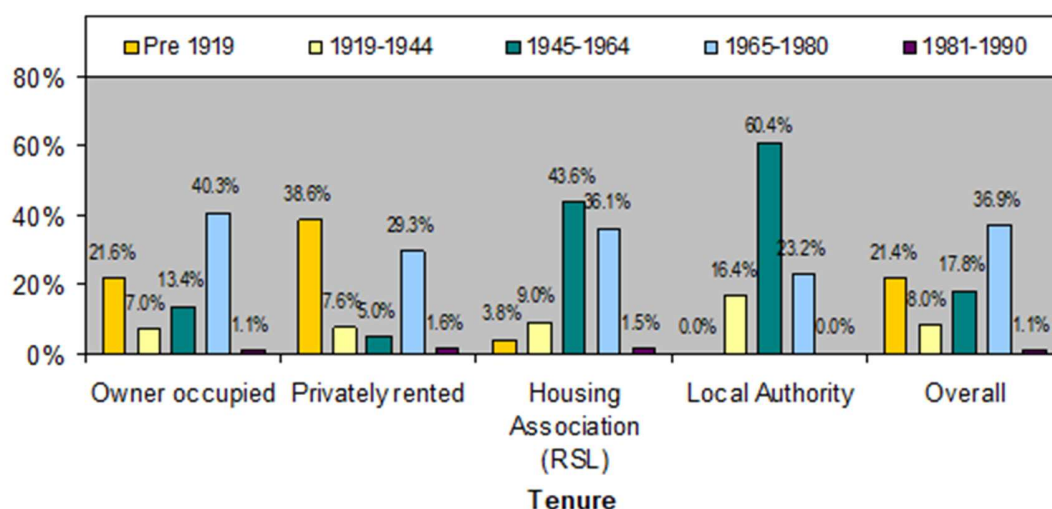
3.19 As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the majority of housing within the private sector is owner occupied. The stock across the district ranges in age and construction. The stock condition survey in 2010 identifies the profile of the housing stock as shown below.



3.20 The survey comments that 'Mid Devon differed from the national profile in that the proportion of dwellings built during the 1965 – 1980 period was substantially higher than nationally (36.9% compared with 21.6%), with post 1990 dwellings also being slightly higher (14.8% compared with 12.2%). The proportions of dwellings built in all other age bands was lower, in particular the inter-war period (8.0% compared with 16.4%) and 1981 to 1990 dwellings (1.1% compared with 8.8%).'

3.21 This indicates that a high proportion of homes in the district are of a type that require modernisation and in particular lack sufficient heating and insulation.

The stock condition survey also shows the proportion of owner occupiers living in the properties of various ages as can be seen below.



- 3.22 It is likely that over the last 10 years this profile has changed and the latest profile will not be due until the results of the 2021 census are available. However, based on this information, and as mentioned above, it is likely that a high proportion of these homes are likely to require repairs due to their age and construction. As part of our work to optimize existing houses (Chapter Two), we build on the review of the 2021 census set out in Objective 19 to gain an up to date understanding of stock condition which will inform future reviews of this strategy.
- 3.23 Our current Housing Assistance Policy (2019) also provides for home improvement loans and a commitment to provide low-cost, financially ethical lending to owner occupiers throughout the district.
- 3.24 The scheme is administered on behalf of the Council by Lendology CIC. They are a community interest company and over the last 3 years have started to expand their lending in the Mid Devon area. Loans are available at an interest rate of 4.2% APR which is substantially lower than many loan companies and specialises in assisting people who may not normally be able to access a loan on the high street. The loan can be used to help with all types of home repairs and improvements and the Lendology team will ensure that the loan is affordable to the customer.
- 3.25 The loan scheme has the capability to be expanded to assist with other areas such as debt consolidation or used to help prevent homelessness where rents or mortgages have fallen behind. This has become a particular concern as a result of the ongoing Covid pandemic and requires further investigation.

3.26 Objective 21 (Chapter Two) provides for a commitment to the ongoing delivery of our Housing Assistance Policy including the loan scheme. Nonetheless, the following specific objective provides for clear targets around expanding the scope of the loans and loan delivery.

### **Objective 36 – Home Improvement Loans and debt consolidation**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Scope of the Home Improvement Loan scheme reviewed to evaluate inclusion of debt consolidation within parameters sustainable for scheme overall</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Review completed by 2022</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</b>  |

### **Objective 37 – Home Improvement Loans delivery**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Home Improvement Loans sanctioned annually</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>10 loans sanctioned annually 2022-2025</b>     |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Mid Devon KPI CP – PSH – 08 (updated)</b>      |

3.27 In 2015 the government introduced the Better Care fund in an attempt to bring health and social care together in an integrated way. The fund is a combination of government funding from the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government (now MHCLG – Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) and includes the grant allocation for disabled facilities grants (DFG).

3.28 In 2017/18, Devon County Council and the District Councils identified an opportunity to provide additional grant and loan products to meet these conditions and deliver against the Health and Wellbeing Board priorities. This led to the development of the Devon Wide Housing Assistance Policy. This forms the basis of our current locally adopted Housing Assistance Policy as mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. As a result, Better Care Funding (BCF) is used quite widely already to provide a range of support of both mandatory (DFG) and other discretionary support to occupiers of privately owned accommodation as set out in the Policy:

- Housing Assistance Grants
- Stairlift Grants
- Home Improvement Loan scheme
- Healthy Homes Grants
- ECO Flex top-up (energy efficiency measures)

3.29 Linked to our commitment to review and update our current Housing Assistance Policy in the widest sense (see Objective 21 in Chapter Two), there is a specific further objective to explore our use of the Better Care Fund.

### **Objective 38 – Better Care Fund**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Updated or new schemes or services that meet the requirements of the Better Care Fund (BCF) to support improved residential accommodation standards in existing homes</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>Work with Devon County Council and other Devon Local Authorities to identify other schemes and services by 2022</b>   |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>2017-19 Integration and Better Care fund policy framework document</b>  |

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Strategic Housing Priority 4: Engage - engaging and working with others including partner organisations to deliver our aims**

There are 2 objectives within this strategic priority:

#### **Strategic Housing role**

Objective 39 – Joint Local Housing Needs Assessment

Objective 40 – Actively engage in partnership working

#### **4.0 Engage**

- 4.1 The Council recognises the need to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders. During the Covid pandemic, this has assumed an increased significance especially with regard to the delivery of front line services and has helped shape how we do things now and in the future.
- 4.2 We are active participants in many formal partnerships which deliver the benefits of economies of scale. However, we also work with smaller organisations such as the Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT) in Tiverton and Navigate CIO to deliver good outcomes for the people of our District.
- 4.3 This chapter sets out a wide range of informal and formal partnerships and joint working that will help deliver all the wider priorities and objectives set out in this Strategy. Given the diverse, sometimes complex and variable nature of these partnerships, this chapter sets out relatively few direct objectives, nonetheless is important in setting out the context in which we work and the wide range of opportunities that are in place and will be developed to support our vision to meet the housing needs and aspirations of our residents through a greater choice of high quality new and adapted homes.

#### **Strategic Housing role**

#### **Local Housing Needs Assessment – working with other Councils**

- 4.4 Mid Devon forms part of a much larger housing market area that also includes Exeter city, Teignbridge and East Devon Districts and part of the Dartmoor National Park. The Council has previously worked collaboratively with other Councils in the Exeter Housing Market Area in the preparation of assessments of housing need, with the most recent technical study being completed in 2015.

- 4.5 District level housing need for informing the preparation of Local Plans for planning purposes must now follow a national standard method that is set by the Government unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. However, there will continue to be a need for the councils in the Exeter Housing Market Area to undertake local housing needs assessments to understand the size, type and tenure of housing need for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes). This assessment shall be reflected in planning policies and can also be used to inform housing strategies and other plans and programmes.
- 4.6 The councils in the Exeter Housing Market Area are currently commissioning a suitable consultant to undertake a Local Housing Needs Assessment. This will be completed in 2022 and will be used to help inform the preparation of a new Local Plan for Mid Devon, a new Supplementary Planning Document for meeting housing needs, and this Mid Devon Housing Strategy.
- 4.7 Exeter City Council, and East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge District Councils, in partnership with Devon County Council are currently preparing a non-statutory joint plan, to include a joint strategy and infrastructure matters, for the area previously referred to as the "Greater Exeter" area. This joint plan can include objectives for housing across the area.
- 4.8 The Council will also continue to engage with councils outside the Exeter Housing Market Area about housing and other strategic planning matters, for example with North Devon District Council and Somerset West and Taunton District Council.
- 4.9 In order to undertake this strategic housing work we have the following objective.

### **Objective 39 – Joint Local Housing Needs Assessment**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>Strategic partnership working on housing matters across the Exeter Housing Market Area through completion of a joint Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA)</b> |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>1 LHNA completed in 2021 - 2022</b>  |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Joint working arrangements approved by Council 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020</b>   |

## **Devon Rural Housing Partnership and Devon Communities Together**

- 4.10 The Council is a partner of the Devon Rural Housing Partnership, which aims to support rural communities in developing sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs and aspirations of local people and to support the sustainability of those communities. Devon Communities Together is an independent charity engaged in a wide range of projects and services that support its vision of dynamic Devon communities shaping their own futures, and fulfils the role of the accountable body and managing agent for the Devon Rural Housing Enabler programme on behalf of the Devon Rural Housing Partnership.

## **Right To Build Task Force**

- 4.11 This provides advice and information to organisations including local authorities, landowners, land promoters, to support the delivery of custom and self-build homes. The Council is currently providing advice to other local authorities through the Right to Build Task Force and is a member of the National Custom and Self-Build Association.

## **Mid Devon Gypsy and Traveller Forum**

- 4.12 The Forum is led by the Council and provides an opportunity for members of the travelling community to meet with officers and elected Members to discuss their housing needs and other matters.

## **Town and Parish Councils**

- 4.13 The Council can provide advice and support to town and parish councils to help them prepare parish and neighbourhood plans. Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for communities to help shape and have greater influence on the development in their local areas.

## **Community engagement**

- 4.14 The preparation of plans, programmes and strategies by the Council will need to involve community engagement at key stages in their preparation, where there are legal requirements to do so and it is necessary and good practice. This can provide significant opportunities for members of the public to have their say in shaping the way in which the Council works toward facilitating the delivery of homes to meet the needs of people from all parts of the Mid Devon community.

## **Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership and Rough Sleeping**

- 4.15 In line with the provisions of our strategy, our approach to the management of homelessness and rough sleeping involves working in partnership with other agencies, as required. The Council is involved in the Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership (DCHOP) which works to ensure that there is a consistent approach to these issues across the peninsula. The Council makes a small financial contribution to support the work of the partnership. This pays for a dedicated officer who is able to undertake research, to contribute to policy development and to arrange training and networking events
- 4.16 During the Covid pandemic, our Housing Options team participated in the regular local coordination cell meetings convened by the Local Resilience Form which brought together a range of partners with the aim of ensuring that vulnerable people were receiving all the help that they required to safeguard them from infection. This meeting was used as a mechanism for joint working and decision-making and included a wider range of partners than DCHOP and the sub-group where matters associated with rough sleeping were discussed and action agreed.
- 4.17 Our Housing Options Accommodation Officer was appointed using the monies obtained under the Government Rough Sleeper Initiative funding stream to increase options for homeless people and working to increase and to improve the links with local estate agents and private sector landlords. One aim of the role is to support tenants to sustain their tenancies, thereby offering reassurance to landlords that the Council can support them to ensure that any tenancy breaches are minimised.
- 4.18 The Council has a dedicated, multiple occupancy property which is used to accommodate those in housing need who present a low risk. Floating support to clients living at this scheme is currently provided by the YMCA. The aim is to support the transition of these people into their own self-contained accommodation, providing advice and assistance to help them become used to organising their own affairs, setting up accounts with utility companies, understanding their tenancy obligations and so on.

## **Working with other Registered Providers and Social Landlords**

- 4.19 The Council works in partnership with the other local authorities (including the unitary authorities in Plymouth and Torbay) in Devon to deliver a choice based lettings scheme known as Devon Home Choice (DHC). All the other registered providers which operate across Devon are also involved in the scheme as partners.
- 4.20 The partnership provides a means by which people can register for a home in Devon, and also search and bid for homes.



Data extracted from the Devon Home Choice system can be used to understand the expressed 'demand' for homes in Mid Devon and can be used alongside assessments of housing need to help the Council prepare plans, programme and strategies for housing, working with Registered Providers, community housing groups and the development industry, and in the management and letting of its own housing stock.

- 4.21 The DHC scheme includes an assessment framework which contains detailed criteria against which housing need is determined. The circumstances of all housing applicants are considered in accordance with this framework and they are then placed into one of five bands, according to need, in descending order of priority.
- 4.22 Although the Council is the largest registered provider of social housing in the District with circa 3,000 homes, there are a number of other housing associations which work in the area. Between them, these other social providers have stock totalling approximately 1,300 units in Mid Devon. Some of these organisations are relatively local, such as Falcon Rural Housing and Cornerstone, but others including the ones with the largest stock holdings in Mid Devon, such as LiveWest, Westward, Stonewater and Sovereign are regional and others such as Guinness Partnership which have a national presence.

### **Working with Private Sector landlords and agents**

- 4.23 As stated, the Council is committed to working with private sector landlords to improve standards and to create more opportunities to rehouse those in greatest need. More on this engagement is provided in Chapter Three.

### **Devon County Council**

- 4.24 The Council works closely with Devon County Council (DCC) across many work streams and is keen to support the aims of the DCC Joint Strategic Approach to Supporting People to Live Independently in Devon 2020 to 2025.
- 4.25 At the time of developing this strategy, negotiations are ongoing relating to the devolvement of the budget for homelessness involving those aged 18+. If this is agreed, the Council should have an ability to spot purchase temporary accommodation and to commission floating support services using the funding from DCC. Such floating support could help to resettle vulnerable people into their own accommodation or help those at risk of homelessness to better sustain their tenancies.

### **Young People**

- 4.26 As previously described, the Council is a signatory to the shared working protocol between the Devon District Councils and DCC designed to prevent homelessness

for 16 and 17 year old people. This sets out an agreement relating to the assessment of 16 and 17 year old young people who present as homeless and who are in need of housing or housing-related support. In line with the Children Act 1989, DCC has responsibility for caring for those young people under the age of 18 who may become homeless.

- 4.27 The Council accepts grant funding from DCC to support work with young people and mediation is seen as an important tool with regard to helping those who may be homeless to reconnect with their families. This is important because there is a shortage of suitable accommodation for people under the age of 18 who become homeless. This is a consequence of a lack of emergency bed spaces across the South West region generally. Unfortunately, if the individual has complex needs, the chances of DCC procuring suitable accommodation for them are likely to be slim.

### **Care leavers**

- 4.28 We work in partnership with the DCC to support care leavers. Some of those leaving care may be especially vulnerable. The aim is to ensure that these clients can make the transition into independent living by providing accommodation suitable for their needs; and the support they require to acquire all the skills and knowledge required to enable them to sustain a tenancy.

### **Working with Central Government**

- 4.29 The Council has worked with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to deliver the work funded by the Rough Sleeper Initiative. We have also worked with MHCLG to extend the timescales associated with the retention of receipts arising from the sale of Council housing. We continue to engage informally with MHCLG and other central Government departments on a range of matters and more formally through opportunities to bid into specific grant funding for the benefit of our community.
- 4.30 Homes England, the government's housing accelerator, is a provider of funding support for housing-led development, including through its Home Building Fund (to private sector organisations) and Community Housing Fund. It can also provide advice to the Council and work in partnership to help bring forward housing schemes. The stated aim of the organisation is to help to improve neighbourhoods, and grow communities.

## **MDDC: A Council with a retained housing stock**

- 4.31 As a social landlord (Mid Devon Housing), the Council is committed to a strong and diverse development programme and to making the most of any funding streams available to support our ambitions.
- 4.32 The Affordable Homes Programme provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable homes. From April 2021, Homes England has made £7.39 billion available to support delivery of up to 130,000 affordable homes across England, but outside London. The target date for completion of these is March 2026. The delivery of new homes is to be undertaken in partnership by partners who undertake to focus on promoting the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), high quality sustainable design and working closely with local small to medium-sized enterprises (SME) house-builders.
- 4.33 The Council will endeavour to apply for funding with regard to any schemes which may be eligible. More on this is provided in Chapter One and specific objects within which will enable us to directly deliver greater new social housing.

## **Safeguarding**

- 4.34 The Council has a safeguarding policy which is designed to ensure that any issues relating to the wellbeing of people in Mid Devon are reported to the appropriate agency. In order to discharge our duties relating to this area of work, all officers receive training and are required to report any concerns about individuals or specific households noted during the course of their work.
- 4.35 As a result of this policy, our officers will liaise with other teams within DCC including Care Direct which supports older adults to remain at home. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will coordinate work in cases where there is an immediate concern regarding the welfare of a child; and DCC can also provide advice in relation to the support of those with learning disabilities.
- 4.36 We also actively work with our tenants and residents to link into much wider support for vulnerable people, some examples of which are:
- General support and signposting - General Practitioners in the District and East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership
  - Mental health services - Devon Partnership NHS Trust
  - Substance misuse - Rise (Recovery and Integration Service) and Y-Smart Drug and Alcohol Services

- Early Help - East and Mid Devon Early Help Partnership. This is part of the Devon Children and Families Partnership offer and provides the support required to prevent more serious issues developing. Early Help brings together people from a range of services and teams who are committed to working with families to improve the situation for parents and children including those who may be adolescent. It can offer support to families prior to the birth of a child as well. In addition, it will provide help in cases where there may be a range of issues including parenting, employment and school attendance. The approach can also be used in cases where anti-social behaviour may be a factor or where there are issues relating to the emotional wellbeing of family members.

### **The Community Safety Partnership**

4.37 The Council has a legal obligation to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime, disorder, and the fear of crime locally, in order to improve quality of life and to create a safe living and working environment. The Council, working with East Devon, has established the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This meets on a quarterly basis to monitor and to oversee the work being delivered by partners in accordance with certain agreed priorities.

4.38 The membership of the CSP includes representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations as well as from the business sector. A number of partner agencies are involved in the Steering Group of the Partnership and these include:

- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Devon County Council
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Probation
- The two local authorities; East and Mid Devon District Councils
- Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group

4.39 The CSP is part of the Safer Devon Partnership and also works with the Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum covering Exeter, East and Mid Devon.

### **MDDC: Working in partnership to support those experiencing financial hardship**

4.40 The Council works closely with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) which is co-located at our main Phoenix House offices. The Neighbourhood Officers in our landlord Mid Devon Housing service have access to the online portal which facilitates communication with the DWP in connection with claims for Universal Credit. In addition, they communicate regularly with dedicated liaison officers whose role it is to assist social landlords to help their tenants to sustain their tenancies.

- 4.41 The Council provides grants to several local organisations to support core activities. Citizens Advice receives funding and is supported by the DWP to assist those experiencing financial hardship to make a claim for Universal Benefit. This is known as the Help to Claim service.
- 4.42 Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT) also receives core funding from the Council. This supports work associated with assisting those who are homeless, the provision of debt and money advice and tenancy support activities.
- 4.43 At the time of developing this Strategy, CHAT was also contracted to work in partnership with the Council on a project to ensure that there is appropriate support available for residents in financial hardship. This new scheme will supplement the crisis and practical support provided by the Local Support Fund with Money and Debt Advice services for those clients for whom it is considered appropriate.
- 4.44 The Local Support Fund was established in response to the pandemic during April 2020. The aim was to provide emergency support to residents whose incomes had been affected by the pandemic and consequent lockdown. It provides emergency payments for food and other household essentials, fuel, and the cost of access to services. The fund has been managed and administered jointly by CHAT and Navigate in partnership with the Council.
- 4.45 Finally, the Council have adopted a new Corporate Debt Recovery Policy which recognises the benefits of early engagement and support with those experiencing financial hardship and this is supported by a new dedicated full-time Customer Welfare Officer to directly support those in need of a wide range of support.

#### **Objective 40 – Actively engage in partnership working**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>How measured -</b> | <b>The number of partnership arrangements supported</b>  |
| <b>Target -</b>       | <b>At least two partnerships each year to assist housing provision in the district</b>             |
| <b>Source -</b>       | <b>Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 (core value of partnership to deliver outcomes and improvements)</b> |

# CONCLUSIONS

These four chapters do not sit in isolation – they are interlinked and underpin the vision of the Council for a greater choice of good quality homes which meets not just the needs, but also the aspirations of all of our residents across our district so we can all grow and prosper. This is just the start of the journey, providing the direction and framework upon which to take our next steps. So what happens next and how will we ensure that the vision is turned into actions?

## Delivering the Housing Strategy

The delivery of the Housing Strategy for Mid Devon will be overseen by its Housing champion and portfolio holder (Cllr Bob Evans). The Council will also set up an informal, but dedicated Housing Strategy Delivery Group chaired by the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing and supported by our wider Corporate Management Team. Below this will be working groups for each chapter of the Housing Strategy. These working groups will be made up of housing, development and planning professionals and specialist partners from both inside and external to the Council. The purpose of the groups is to develop a more dedicated Action Plan around each priority outlined in this strategy and to oversee their delivery over the next five years. Where resources are not available, it will be the role of these groups to seek and secure additional resources where possible. The lead officers of each group will report progress made against the action plans and targets back to the Delivery Group, the Housing portfolio holder and to our partners and residents.

## Reviewing the strategy

In this fast paced world of frequent policy and legislative changes, the Housing Strategy will be reviewed annually and revised if required. The views of stakeholders and partners will be considered and used to influence the housing strategy and its direction of travel.

## Closing statement

We recognise the vital role housing plays both to the district and to its residents and that is why we are committed to growing and improving the quality of our housing and strengthening our communities. This strategy brings together the issues, future challenges and opportunities for us to deliver our ambitions. It will be a long and challenging journey, and must include and involve a wide range of partners and our communities to make it a success, but the rewards that stronger, better housing offers will make a significant difference to lives of our residents, their health, happiness and prosperity.

## SCRUTINY 16 AUGUST 2021

### MENOPAUSE UPDATE

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services

**Responsible Officer:** Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste

**Reason for Report:** Scrutiny requested a follow up to the presentation of a report in February 2021 on work regarding the menopause that was recommended to advance the organisation's ability to both raise awareness and provide support to the workforce.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee is asked to note the information below

**Financial Implications:** No financial risk.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** This report sits within the current budget and policy framework.

**Legal Implications:** No legal implications.

**Risk Assessment:** It is important that the Council can effectively address issues relating to the menopause.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** No equality issues highlighted in this report. Arguably Age?

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** This work is in addition to the Corporate Plan.

**Impact on Climate Change:** No climate change issues highlighted in this report.

#### 1.0 Introduction/Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on how the organisation has advanced recommendations detailed in a report regarding the menopause that was approved by Scrutiny in February 2021.

1.2 These items included communication and raising awareness around the menopause, creating a pool of wellbeing ambassadors that can signpost and provide practical advice and support to colleagues, the provision of training and the running of an independent staff survey this autumn (to ask about communication and effectiveness of methods used to raise awareness).

#### 2.0 Communication and Raising Awareness around the Menopause

2.1 Chris Hodgson has written articles for both the internal staff electronic newsletter the Link (and WIS) on the subject of the menopause and the work we are planning to do to raise awareness of the subject and provide better

practical support. This has included providing key information and subject matter for reading, the highlighting of practical points, tips and advice for staff and the dissemination of further guidance and advice to the all staff consultative group Impact and the Union.

- 2.2 A combined Union and Impact meeting was recently run to give clear messaging and education on the menopause and to encourage practical tips and advice to be effectively disseminated to staff.
- 2.3 Other immediate priorities have seen a focus on raising awareness of the employee assistance scheme which offers telephone counselling and other services as well as the coaching of line managers on the importance of open and informal conversations through the recent Appraisal/PDR scheme.

### **3.0 Setting up a Wellbeing Ambassadors Pool to provide Support**

- 3.1 During the above combined Impact and Union meetings a pool of wellbeing ambassadors was established with the aim of educating and raising awareness amongst the workforce of key subjects including the menopause. There are three key priorities which the ambassadors have agreed to implement. These are;

- To raise awareness of the menopause amongst colleagues.
- To signpost support and help provide/highlight practical tips.
- To provide direct support to colleagues where it is appropriate to do so.

- 3.2 This approach recognises that peers can often help educate their colleagues better than a management (top down) approach but especially where the subject matter is sensitive and/or personal in nature. It also helps give employees confidence that they can share issues in a safe environment.
- 3.3 The ambassadors will be further mobilised to raise awareness and signpost support around key related subjects including mental health and wellbeing, reasonable adjustments and other equality related issues.

### **4.0 Learning and Development/Staff Survey**

- 4.1 A package of learning and development is being designed and taken forwards by our Learning and Development Specialist Helen Duke to be accessed by all staff.
- 4.2 A recent line manager survey has explored how we may move to greater mobile, hybrid working and some of the changes that we may need to make as an employer to allow such a change to happen. The wider support we can offer the workforce around issues like the menopause is a key consideration of this work.
- 4.3 This autumn we will be running a staff survey to gauge feedback and opinion on key issues including the menopause. The results of the survey will be available to see before Christmas.



## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 5.1 There are a number of priorities to focus on in progressing our work around the menopause and the implementation of an effective work programme.
- 5.2 It is important that we roll out a full programme of learning and development for line managers so they can deal with arising issues around the menopause effectively and in a way which gives confidence to the workforce.
- 5.3 The results of this autumn's staff survey will be important in shaping our future people management priorities. It will be interesting to gauge the views of the wider workforce on the issue of the menopause and the best approach to take.
- 5.4 All of the above will inform the writing of a menopause policy which will outline the approach of the Council to addressing issues related to the menopause and the support that can be accessed by the workforce.
- 5.5 I have asked Catherine Yandle to take the above programme of work forwards which she has agreed to do.

**Contact for more Information:** Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste ([MPage@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:MPage@middevon.gov.uk))

**Circulation of the Report:** Cabinet Member seen and approved Yes – Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Leadership Team seen and approved Yes.

**List of Background Papers:** Menopause Paper submitted to Scrutiny February 2021.

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# **Menopause in the workplace: A review of support available in Mid Devon District Council**

**February 2020**

A review by a Working Group of the Mid Devon District Council Scrutiny Committee

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## **Introduction**

Women over the age of 50 are the fastest growing portion of the UK workforce and all of these will go through the menopause during their working lives. Despite being a natural stage of life, the menopause remains somewhat of a taboo topic in the workplace. Unlike pregnancy or maternity, it is not well understood or provided for in workplace cultures, policies and training. Managers' and colleagues' attitudes to menopausal women make a difference.

Experiencing menopause symptoms often has negative impact at work, affecting not just individuals but also their team and the organisation. As an employer, the Council has a duty to look after the health and safety of employees. This review looks at how the Council can best support staff as they go through this period of their lives. Providing support to employees and their line managers will not only have wide ranging benefit for workplace, but could also help mitigate the impact of the menopause for our staff and improve their overall wellbeing.

## **Rationale**

Members were made aware by some staff and line managers that they were struggling to access guidance on the menopause in the Council. The Scrutiny Committee agreed that employees experiencing menopause, or symptoms associated with the menopause, should feel supported by the Council and know where to go to get advice. It was also agreed that managers need the right information and tools so that they can best support their team members through this time.

A Working Group on menopause in the workplace was set up to review the support available to employees and their line manager. The aim was to provide better support to staff on the menopause which could bring wide-ranging benefits for the workplace and the overall wellbeing of staff.

## **Methodology and approach**

In order to ensure balanced representation on the Working Group, it was agreed that the Group would co-opt a Member outside of the Scrutiny Committee. As a result, Cllr Mrs N Woollatt, Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services, volunteered to sit on the Working Group.

The first meeting of the Working Group was held on 13 July 2020, and the group agreed to meet monthly where possible. The Group held both meetings and discussions with relevant Officers to understand how the menopause is currently being addressed within the Council. Members agreed early in the process that a staff survey would be useful in order to clearly understand the range of issues within the Council and how best to support the specific challenges staff face.

Members also agreed that they would explore discussions with:

- Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) staff first hand – both employees and line managers, to hear some lived experiences of menopause in the workplace;

- A medical expert – to fully understand the symptoms, impact and treatment of the menopause;
- A Unison representative in the Council – Susan Sharland, attended a number of meetings of the Working Group.

In addition, the Group reviewed a large number of workplace guidance documents, notably: the Unison guidance and model policy; the LGA 'Managing the Menopause at Work'; and the TUC Menopause in the workplace toolkit. The Group also reviewed a number of organisational policies, and particularly valued the leaflet for staff developed by the Police Mutual.

To fully understand the issues associated with the menopause in the workplace, Members felt that it would be useful to attend relevant training. As part of the review Members of the Working Group, and Officers, attended an online learning session by Foot Anstey focusing on menopause in the workplace. The Unison representative also attended TUC training on menopause in the workplace and shared the key outcomes with the Group.

### **What is the menopause?**

The menopause is a natural stage of life that most women experience. It is marked by changes in hormones and the ending of menstruation. Women may experience a range of physical and psychological symptoms. It can also affect transgender and non-binary people.

The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, and in the UK the average age is 51. It can, however, happen much earlier - many women experience the menopause before 45 (early menopause) and a significant number of women (1 in 100) experience the menopause before the age of 40 - this is known as a premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

The menopause usually happens over a number of years. During peri-menopause (the period of transition that takes place several years before the menopause) the ovaries gradually produce less oestrogen in the four to five years leading up to menopause. In the last two years of peri-menopause, oestrogen levels drop significantly. This is usually the stage where the most severe menopausal symptoms are experienced. Twelve months after the last period marks the official stage of the menopause.

In the years after the menopause, symptoms like hot flushes usually ease while health risks caused by decreased oestrogen levels typically increase. This is known as post menopause.

### **What are the symptoms?**

There are a range of symptoms associated with the menopause and each woman feels them differently. Most women will experience some menopausal symptoms, but the duration and severity varies from woman to woman. Some symptoms can be quite severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities, including within the work place.

Menopausal symptoms can begin months or years before periods stop and last for around four years after the last period, although some women experience them for much longer.

Women may find that their symptoms change and other symptoms may develop over time. The TUC lists the following as symptoms that women commonly report:

- hot flushes and palpitations
- night sweats (increased sweating may also be experienced during the day)
- insomnia and sleep disturbances
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- headaches
- joint aches
- skin irritation and dryness
- dry eyes
- urinary problems
- hair loss
- changes to periods such as irregular, heavy bleeding or painful periods
- vaginal dryness, itching and discomfort
- loss of libido

There may also be associated psychological symptoms including:

- depression
- anxiety
- panic attack
- mood swings
- irritability
- problems with memory
- loss of confidence

Because they may still be having regular periods when they first start to get symptoms, many women do not always realise that they are experiencing the perimenopause and may not understand what is causing their symptoms. This can be a barrier to accessing support.

### **Menopause in the workplace**

Local Government is a female dominated workforce. It also has an average age of 40 and therefore a significant portion of our workers will be affected by the menopause while working. Line managers and employees, however, often find it difficult to discuss how the menopause is affecting a woman's working life and relationships. Problems associated with the menopause can be made worse by the fact that there remains considerable ignorance and misunderstanding about the menopause, with it often being treated as an embarrassing or taboo subject.

Not all women suffer the symptoms of the menopause, but some can suffer from symptoms that have a significantly negative impact on their performance and attendance at work. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel &

Development (CIPD), three out of five working women experiencing menopause symptoms say it has a negative impact on them at work. Additionally, according to the LGA it is estimated that for around 10% of women, the symptoms are so bad that they feel unable to continue working.

Symptoms can be exacerbated by the work environment, for example if the office temperature is too high. Symptoms such as insomnia can reduce concentration and focus, and changes in mood and irritability can also impact on relationships with others. According to Unison, women find that some symptoms may mean they miss out on promotions and training, have to reduce their hours or lose confidence in the workplace. Some symptoms also impact on absence rates.

In Mid Devon District Council we currently have 51% of workers who are female, and 33% who are over the age of 40, so the menopause may affect a significant proportion of our workforce. Through this review the Group wanted to provide an opportunity for MDDC employees and line managers to give their experience of the issue so that the Council can understand how best to support them.

### **The expert view**

The Members of the Group agreed it would be useful to fully understand the symptoms, impact and treatment of the menopause with a medical expert. Dr Megan Parkin from Castle Place GP Practice in Tiverton attended a virtual meeting of the Group to talk through her experience of treating menopausal patients.

The Group heard how symptoms can affect women, when they are experienced and for how long. There was discussion on the medical reasons for both the physical and the cognitive symptoms, and how each can have a significant impact on personal and professional lives. They heard information on the treatment for the menopause and the side effects that can occur.

Dr Parkin's key message was that every woman experiences the menopause differently, and as such, a one size fits all approach is not helpful. Dr Parkin stressed the need for employers to recognise that adaptations needed may change through the course of the menopause, over many years as symptoms change. She recommended ensuring that line managers have the tools to support their team on an individual basis, and that they truly understand the impact of symptoms on individual roles. Dr Parkin suggested that managing stress can have a big impact on helping to mitigate other symptoms (because it can help oestrogen levels to rise), and that the workplace has an important part to play in that.

Dr Parkin also provided information on ways in which GPs can help (for example providing a 'fit note' detailing the adaptations an employee needs to work) and how employers can helpfully encourage employees to discuss symptoms with a GP. In addition, she stressed that normalising the conversation will help encourage people to seek help.

The Working Group would like to extend their thanks to Dr Parkin for sharing her knowledge and experience with the Group.



## **Discussions with staff**

The Group wanted to understand some lived experiences of the menopause in the Council and as such invited staff to discuss their experiences with them in a safe and confidential environment.

Over the course of the review, the Group heard first hand from seven members of staff who openly talked about their experiences as an employee and (where relevant) as a line manager (either in person at a remote meeting, or where this was not possible, in writing).

During discussions, the Group particularly heard how staff found it difficult to talk to line managers about issues related to the menopause, particularly if line managers were younger or male. There were discussions on organisational culture and how awareness could be raised so that staff are made more aware of the symptoms and issues that might be faced within the Council. Members heard about issues faced not just by those working in an office, but also those who work off site. Staff stressed how a supportive and understanding line manager could make a big difference in helping to deal with symptoms or problems associated with those symptoms. Staff also raised that unisex toilets in some areas of the building make it difficult to deal with certain symptoms.

The Members of the Working Group would like to particularly extend their thanks to these members of staff for talking so honestly about the impact of the menopause on their working lives and what the Council could do better to support them. These conversations enabled Members to fully understand the impact of the menopause and the specific problems and issues faced by staff in the Council.

## **Results of staff surveys**

In order to get the full picture of how the menopause is affecting staff, line managers and the organisation as a whole, and the solutions that might make a difference, the Group agreed to undertake two staff surveys. Anonymous surveys were sent, one for all staff (regardless of age or sex); and one for all line managers. The all staff survey was based on the Unison model workplace survey found in their guidance and model policy on the menopause.

It was agreed that the survey would be sent to all staff, partly as an awareness raising exercise, but also because the group were aware that there would be employees for which if the menopause was not affecting them directly, they likely knew someone that it did. The survey asked about personal experiences of the menopause in the workplace, and for those that had not experienced it, asked what support might help colleagues with symptoms. Consideration of all experiences was important for the Members of the Group and the survey greatly assisted in understanding how the menopause impacts on health and wellbeing in the Council.

The line manager survey aimed to understand how line managers would currently deal with an issue if it was raised with them, and what tools they would like to see introduced in order to better support staff.

## Key findings – All staff survey

There were 119 responses to the all staff survey (out of 498 staff). Of those that responded to the questions 67 (56%) have experienced, or are experiencing symptoms associated to the menopause or perimenopause. Of those:

- 48% report experiencing hot flushes.
- 79% report suffering from interrupted sleep patterns.
- 81% experience mood swings, irritability, tearfulness, lowered confidence, feelings of not being able to cope, anxiety and depression.
- 78% suffer from physical symptoms like headaches and/or migraines, aches and joint pains, dry or sore eyes and menstrual problems such as flooding.
- 53% have not/would not discuss their symptoms with a line manager.
- The most common reason for not discussing symptoms with a line manager is embarrassment (58%) followed by having an opposite sex line manager (45%) (please note – you could choose more than one option).
- 29% have taken time off work due to the menopause.
- Of all that responded, 81% believe it would be useful to have a designated person to talk to about experiencing the menopause in the workplace.

Comments in the survey raised some specific environmental issues that the Council should consider reviewing. For example, staff commented that desk fans provided are too large (and that papers are blown around) and that meeting rooms are often very warm or it is not clear how to adjust the temperature.

Flexible working was also raised regularly, with staff recognising that when they were offered flexible working, it had improved their ability to cope and mental health considerably – particularly if they were experiencing sleeplessness. A number of staff admitted that they had used annual leave or flexi leave when symptoms of sleeplessness were particularly bad. Staff also highlighted that it is helpful, for a range of symptoms, if they are able to work from home on occasion.

Comments also raised issues about culture, and why staff do not feel comfortable raising symptoms with their line manager. A number of staff said they felt that the menopause is something that they 'just had to get on with' or was just not well understood within the Council. Staff were very supportive of having a designated person to speak to within the workplace, and there was similar support for forums where they could talk to other staff going through similar issues.

A number of staff expressed just how severely their symptoms were affecting their working life, some said they had considerably lost confidence in their abilities and one even said she was considering leaving her job. Many staff also made the link between their symptoms and their mental health, and the importance of recognising that the two are connected, as well as noting that stress can exacerbate symptoms.

## Line manager Survey

55 line managers responded to the survey, which is just over two thirds of all line managers in the organisation. The key findings from the survey were:

- Just 16% have had an employee come to them to discuss issues associated with the menopause in the workplace.

- 62% felt they would benefit from further training or guidance on how to deal with employees enquiring about support for menopausal symptoms.
- Line managers commented that they would welcome training to understand how to support staff both practically and emotionally.
- Additionally, a large number commented that they would welcome formal guidance that sets out options available and where to signpost staff.

There was recognition, however, that some staff may find this a difficult topic to discuss with their line manager, and that normalising the issue would help more women speak up.

## **Conclusions**

It is clear from the staff surveys and discussions with staff that many women in the Council are impacted by symptoms associated with the menopause. The wellbeing of employees is integral to how staff feel about their jobs, how they perform and can also impact on retention and sickness rates. There are clear benefits to providing better support for women experiencing the menopause, or symptoms associated with the menopause, and in doing so creating a positive working environment where individuals and the organisation can thrive.

## **Workplace culture**

A massive step towards ensuring the wellbeing of staff is to normalise the issue of the menopause. The Council should create a workplace where employees can talk about the menopause openly and without embarrassment. This could include:

- Work place support - in order to promote wellbeing in the organisation, the Council should consider introducing 'Wellbeing Ambassadors'. These would be members of staff who will be supported by relevant training to be able to provide advice to employees on a range of issues, including menopause, mental health and other relevant workplace issues. Ambassadors should have clear knowledge about where to signpost staff for further support if necessary. The Council should also set up an online forum, for staff and/or line managers, as a safe space to discuss with other employees problems and issues they are having. This would help empower staff and enable them to self-manage, share knowledge and get informal support from other colleagues in the same position.
- Providing information – in order to communicate a positive attitude towards the menopause, the Council should initiate an awareness raising campaign. It was clear from our survey that staff find it difficult to talk about the issue of menopause because it is still seen as private and embarrassing. Aimed at both men and women, awareness could be raised through posters, internal communications and utilisation of the Wellbeing Ambassadors.
- Workplace training – training would help demystify the symptoms and challenges of the menopause and can equip managers to be able to normalise the menopause at work. It would help provide the tools needed by line managers (as shown in the line manager survey) on how to respond to

staff that come to them with issues associated with the menopause. It would also give managers the confidence to start the conversation with staff and know how to signpost staff to the appropriate support available in the organisation.

## **Workplace policy**

A work place policy on the menopause should be drawn up, agreed and promoted to all staff. A workplace policy on the menopause can provide valuable advice and information to support women experiencing the menopause so that any barriers to discussion may be removed. A policy will clearly set the options available to staff experiencing symptoms, and how line managers can best support them. Guidance will help to foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably hold conversations about the menopause, and promote greater understanding of the symptoms and support available. It will also help employees to feel confident in discussing it with their line manager so they can work together to ensure the necessary support they need.

## **Work place environment**

The all staff survey raised some specific issues that staff are facing with regards to the working environment. In order to ensure an inclusive environment for women experiencing symptoms of the menopause, the workplace environment and the support available should be reviewed by the Council. This could include whether desk fans are too large and how to ensure all staff know how to regulate the temperature in meeting rooms. Consideration should also be given to ensuring understanding needs of staff not working in an office space, and whether the current unisex toilets could be changed. There should also be a discussion regarding whether the First Aid room on the first floor of Phoenix House could be promoted as a quiet space that staff could use to rest if needed.

## **Recommendations**

1. That MDDC introduces 'Wellbeing Ambassadors'. These will be members of staff who will be supported by relevant training to be able to provide advice to employees on a range of issues, including menopause, mental health and other workplace issues. Ambassadors should have clear knowledge about where to signpost staff for further support if necessary.
2. That a review of support available to staff with menopause symptoms takes place. This could include whether desk fans are too large and how to ensure all staff know how to regulate the temperature in meeting rooms. Consideration should also be given to ensuring understanding needs of staff not working in an office space, and whether the current unisex toilets could be changed.
3. That MDDC has an awareness raising campaign on the menopause to normalise the issue and make staff aware of the support available. This could be through posters, internal communications and utilisation of the Wellbeing Ambassadors.

4. That a MDDC work place policy on the menopause is drawn up, agreed and promoted to all staff. The policy should help signpost support and links to other relevant policies as well as include clarity around: options available for staff experiencing symptoms; how to log time taken off; options for flexible working including the ability to work out of hours if needed.
5. That all line managers receive menopause in the workplace training. This will help ensure line managers are clear about the symptoms and impact of the menopause, as well as the support available to staff. A booklet for staff and line managers should also be produced as guidance on options available.
6. That an online forum is set up, for staff and/or line managers as a safe space to discuss with other employees problems and issues they are having.

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## SCRUTINY 16 AUGUST 2021

### ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services

**Responsible Officer:** Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste

**Reason for Report:** Scrutiny requested a follow up to the presentation of the establishment report in February 2021 on both the performance of the workforce but also how this had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee is asked to note the information below

**Financial Implications:** Financial risk will only occur where the structure of a service changes without adherence to allocated budgets.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** This report sits within the current budget and policy framework.

**Legal Implications:** In accordance with article 14 of the Constitution.

**Risk Assessment:** If the establishment is not appropriately managed and reviewed then service delivery will be put at risk.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** No equality issues highlighted in this report.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** This report highlights the Establishment figures and, as such, supports our aim to reduce costs without affecting service quality and continuity.

**Impact on Climate Change:** No climate change issues highlighted in this report.

#### 1.0 Introduction/Background

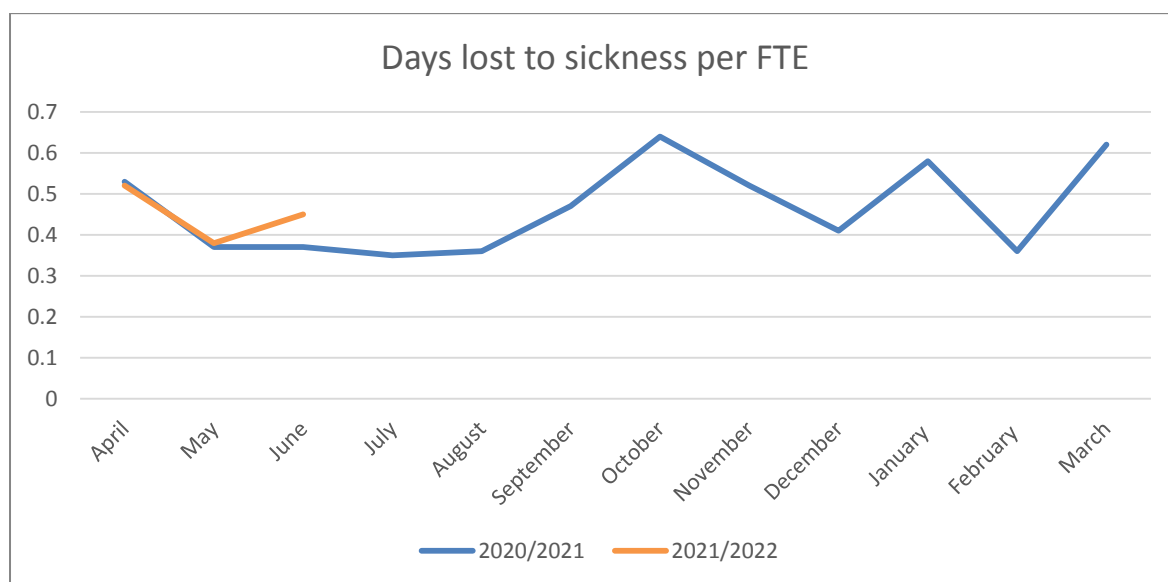
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on the performance of our workforce and how this has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 These items included updates on the key establishment indicators of sickness and agency expenditure, turnover and the impact of COVID-19 on our workforce.

#### 2.0 Sickness Absence, Agency Expenditure and Establishment

- 2.1 Last year MDDC had an average of 5.57 sickness days per FTE person, 2.7% of overall workforce time. This compares to 8.10 sickness days that were lost per FTE employee in 2019/20. For the 2021/22 financial year there is both a target and subsequent action plan to reduce the number of days lost to less than 7 days per FTE employee (which would put the Council in line with

industry standards across other councils). This is down to a rise in sickness that is expected to occur as a result of further COVID-19 restrictions being lifted and the presence of further variants that may require additional vaccination over time.

- 2.2 A new sickness absence policy was introduced in 2020 to clarify the reporting and certifying arrangements for sickness, a new management guideline (an employee should not have more than six days or absence in the year) and clearer interventions around long term and short term sickness absence. There has been a shift away from short term sickness to long term sickness during the pandemic (it has been suggested an increase in working from home has helped to reduce short term sickness).
- 2.3 In the first quarter of this year (April to June 2021) the Council has lost 1.35 days to absence per FTE employee, meaning we are currently in line to meet the target set for the current financial year. Our sickness absence is usually less in the first two quarters of the financial year than in the last two due to the autumn and winter seasons (not including COVID-19). We have also seen the number of staff who were on furlough reduce from 20% to 0% as services like Leisure reopened and resumed their services to the public.



- 2.5 There is a comprehensive package of measures being developed by our new Health and Safety Officer, Chris Hodgson which look to improve levels of wellbeing and improved support around mental health in the workplace. This includes establishing a base line of where the Council is at in terms of the wellbeing of its staff and look at using the Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale.
- 2.6 The Council is also planning to run an all staff survey in the autumn to gauge opinion and feedback on key organisation performance indicators including communication, leadership, development and wellbeing. This will be run by an independent organisation to both ensure a greater level of trust and confidence in the survey and its impartiality. It will also be able to benchmark our results against different organisations including other councils.



- 2.7 One of the consequences of high sickness absence and other poor establishment performance (unresolved, high conflict) is rising agency costs.
- 2.8 During the first quarter of 2021/22 the organisation spent £172,710.47 on agency workers (some of this spend owing to providing cover to critical services during COVID-19). In the last two financial years the Council has paid out £534, 378.49 in 2019/20 and £576,368.28 in 2020/21. Agency workers provide cover to vacant posts as well as employees who are sick or absent from the workplace in critical services including waste and leisure. So there is further incentive to continuously improve our position regarding sickness absence.
- 2.9 The below tables compare the establishment for the Council and their associated costs for 2019/20 and 2020/21. Although the Establishment is effectively the same the reduction in the number of employees being paid is explained by both post holders being placed on furlough and some vacancies being held back prior to future restructuring. Please note that the increase in gross pay for 2020/21 includes a 2.75% cost of living award which is made to each member of staff.

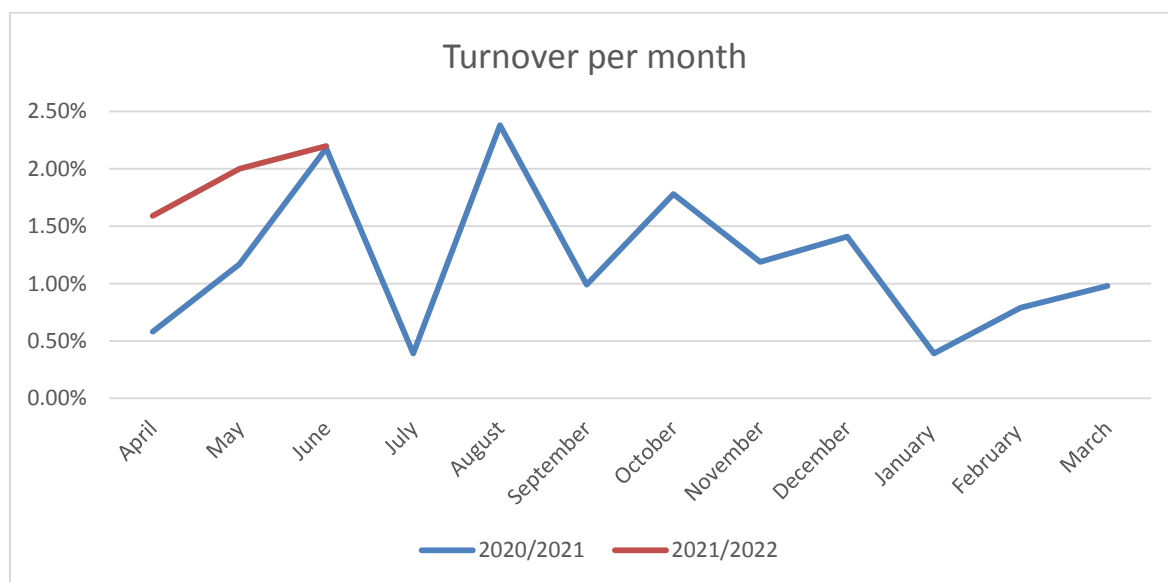
|  | 2020/21        | 2019/20        |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Total number of employees/workers paid | 697            | 718            |
| Establishment FTE                      | 422.79         | 422.11         |
| Total Taxable Gross Pay                | £11,515,324.63 | £11,170,336.78 |
| Employers NI                           | £ 1,038,135.28 | £ 1,024,710.32 |
| Employers Pension                      | £ 1,832,713.73 | £ 1,595,839.06 |
|  |                |                |

### 3.0 Turnover

- 3.1 Turnover for the first quarter stood (1 April to 30 June 2021) stands at 5.79%. During this period 29 employees left the Council; there were 24 resignations, 2 dismissals with notice, 1 end of probationary, 1 redundancy and 1 retirement.
- 3.2 This compares with turnover standing at 3% in Q4 of the 2020/21 financial year and a cumulative turnover figure of 14.23%. This was lower than the cumulative turnover figure for 2019/20 which stood at 18%.
- 3.3 Below is a full breakdown of all leavers and data collected during exit interviews for last 18 months. This information is shown in Appendix 1 with the below graph comparing turnover in 2020/21 with the first quarter of 2021/22. There has been a similar rise in the rate of turnover during the first three months of both financial periods.
- 3.4 Mid Devon, like other local authorities, is facing increasing challenges over turnover due to a number of different external factors. In terms of manual work the lack of supply of Eastern European workers has hit different industries hard which has had the result of increased competition for drivers, loaders and other types of worker amongst different sectors.
- 3.5 These challenges have brought into sharp focus the need to consider our longer term employment offer for potential applicants. Key aspects include

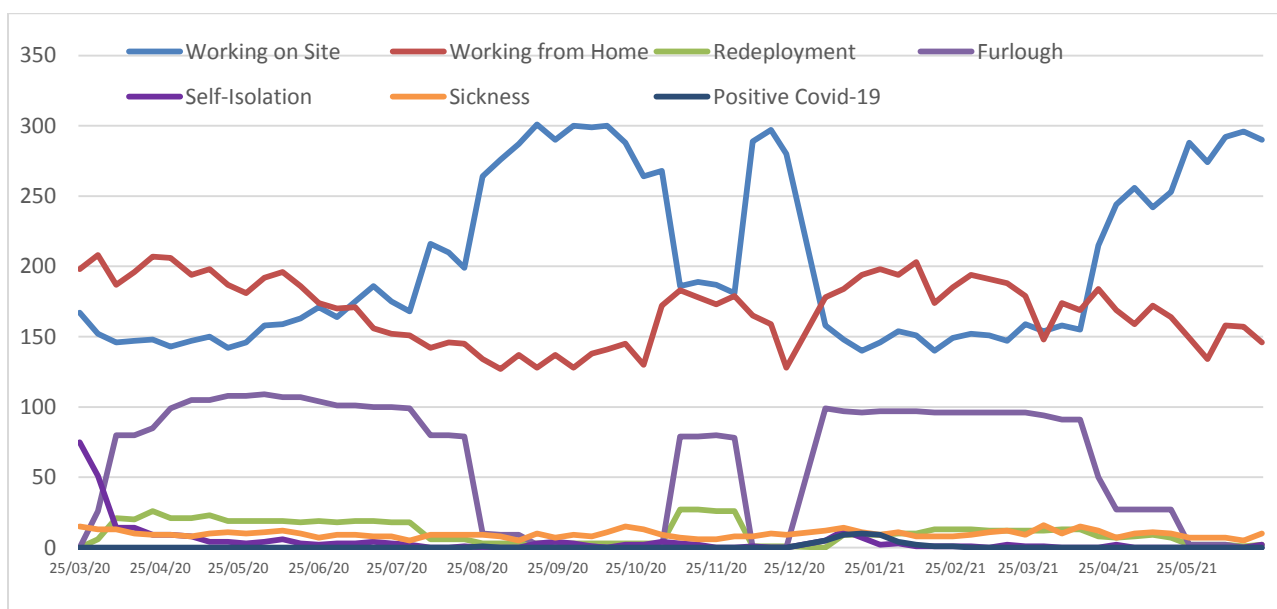
promoting our benefits, promoting greater flexible working where it is possible to do so (see next section on work already commenced around greater mobile, hybrid working) but also creating a path of progression and development for each employee so we give ourselves the best possible opportunity to retain the talent and leaders of tomorrow.

- 3.6 Our work around the Evolve learning and development project has developed considerably since I last reported to members with a first successful run of online Appraisal/PDR completed and a 90% response rate achieved to date. This will inform a future skills analysis piece that has been captured by the Appraisal process which will inform future workforce planning as well as talent and leadership development programmes.



## 4.0 COVID-19

- 4.1 Since March 23 2020 when the government announced a formal lockdown of both businesses, services and offices, the Council have been closely managing both the health and wellbeing of its workforce as well as how it is redeployed to ensure critical services are delivered to the public.
- 4.2 Key activity has focused on reporting the status and performance of our workforce on first a daily then a weekly basis. During COVID 19 our workforce has been very stable in its status with at first 30% of our employees on site or in the office delivering critical work or services, 40% working from home and 20% furloughed.
- 4.3 This has changed over recent months with the lifting of restrictions and the opening up of key services including Leisure so around 55% of our workforce are currently in work with 30% working from home. The Council is maintaining its stance of encouraging the workforce to work from home where possible, isolate if necessary and get tested if required to protect the safety of our workforce and the public we serve. The below graphs show how the workforce has had to adjust to different restrictions imposed over recent months.



4.4 The furlough scheme allowed employers to be reimbursed for 80% of their employees' salaries where employees were unable to work due to closures etc. caused by Covid 19.

4.5 We have furloughed mainly employees from our leisure services over the last 18 months (this includes the casual employees from Leisure). It also includes employees who were shielding from other service areas.

The money reclaimed during 2021, since the last Establishment report, from the furlough scheme is as follows:

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| January 21  | £74123.67 |
| February 21 | £69833.22 |
| March 21    | £54359.58 |
| April 21    | £25544.59 |
| May 21      | £980.27   |

We have not claimed any furlough allowance since 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021

4.7 Over the last 18 months the Council have responded to the ever changing guidance and restrictions to ensure that our workforce were appropriately protected but also that our services could be maintained to the highest possible standard during this time. An example of us having to adapt to these conflicting priorities was reducing the period that staff had to self-isolate to 21 days after finding out that COVID symptoms can be detected by a PCR test up to 90 days after an individual has contracted COVID-19. Our original position was to request a negative PCR test to be obtained before an employee returned to the workplace.

4.8 Other key initiatives have included publicising drop in opportunities for staff to get their COVID vaccinations and to bring forwards their second jab to 8

weeks (from the previous position of it being 12). We also worked closely with Devon County to set up a testing centre in Exe Valley which was manned by our own Leisure staff and we have taken delivery of lateral flow tests to give to our front line service staff (although these are currently in short supply). The organisation has run two staff surveys in relation to COVID-19 to get feedback on the practice that has had to be brought in to ensure critical services could operate to the highest possible standard during the pandemic. Overall feedback was very positive with staff highlighting increased benefit and productivity from being able to work in a more flexible way.

- 4.9 The organisation has started to look ahead to allow some parts of the workforce to work in a more mobile, hybrid way in the future. This recognises that whilst some aspects of the workforce will need to be on site to deliver front line services to the public, other parts of the workforce have benefited from having greater flexibility and being able to go to the area of activity where they are most required. Other opportunities include reducing our carbon footprint and revising our approach to travel as well as looking at options around the potential renting out of office space. We have just completed the first of many surveys with our service leads and are about to start the first of two pilots where we will look ahead to how mobile, hybrid working could operate in the longer term.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

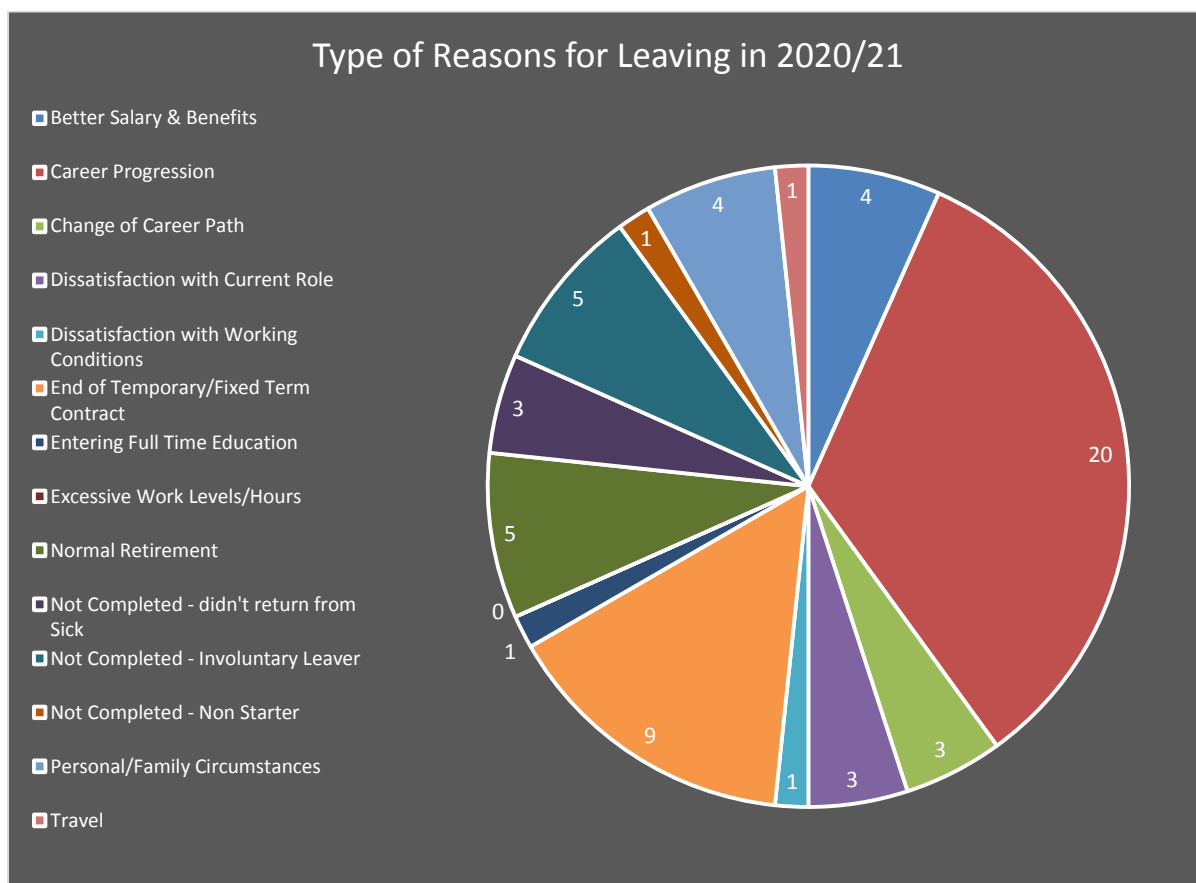
- 5.1 There are a number of priorities which the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste wants to focus on in terms of our Establishment performance but he would like to draw attention to three key priorities.
- 5.2 It is vital that we continue to plan ahead for COVID-19 and a potential fourth wave in the autumn/winter period. It is also predicted that seasonal flu and other illness may result in a spike in staff absence during this period. We will also continue to develop our work around mobile, hybrid working.
- 5.3 We are about to commence quarterly performance review meetings that will be chaired by the Corporate Management Team and encourage workforce data including sickness, turnover and vacancy rates to be compared to our budget position as well as agency and overtime expenditure. This will allow a fuller understanding of our performance to be obtained.
- 5.4 We will compile the skills analysis from the recent running of online Appraisals and use this to inform workforce planning as well as our plans around talent management and leadership development. We will also run an independent staff survey this autumn with the results available to be viewed before Christmas.

**Contact for more Information:** Matthew Page, **Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste** ([MPage@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:MPage@middevon.gov.uk))

**Circulation of the Report:** Cabinet Member seen and approved Yes – Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Leadership Team seen and approved Yes.

**List of Background Papers:** Establishment Paper submitted to Cabinet February 2020.

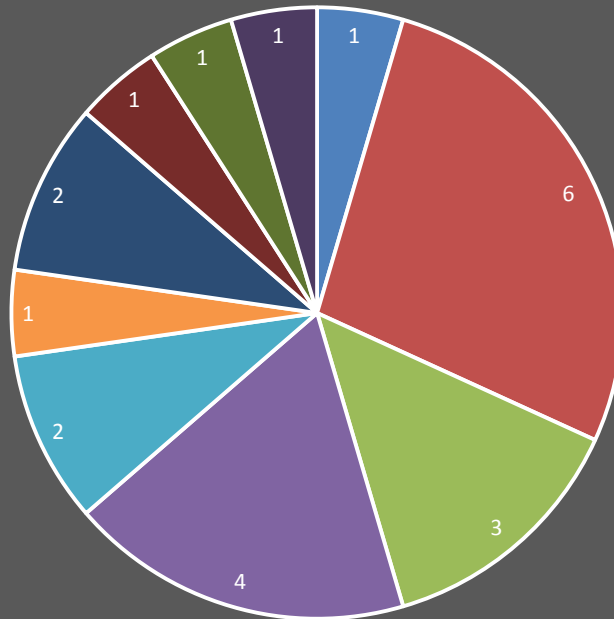
## Appendix 1



| Type of Reasons for Leaving 2020/21     |    |
|---|----|
| Better Salary & Benefits                | 4  |
| Career Progression                      | 20 |
| Change of Career Path                   | 3  |
| Dissatisfaction with Current Role       | 3  |
| Dissatisfaction with Working Conditions | 1  |
| End of Temporary/Fixed Term Contract    | 9  |
| Entering Full Time Education            | 1  |
| Excessive Work Levels/Hours             | 0  |
| Normal Retirement                       | 5  |
| Not Completed - didn't return from Sick | 3  |
| Not Completed - Involuntary Leaver      | 5  |
| Not Completed - Non Starter             | 1  |
| Personal/Family Circumstances           | 4  |
| Travel                                  | 1  |

### Type of Reasons for Leaving in 2021/22 Q1

- Better salary & benefits
- Career Progression
- Change of Career Path
- Dissatisfaction with current role
- Excessive work levels/hours
- Normal Retirement
- Not completed - involuntary leaver
- Probationary
- Redundancy
- Travel



#### Type of Reasons for Leaving 2021 Q1

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Better salary & benefits           | 1 |
| Career Progression                 | 6 |
| Change of Career Path              | 3 |
| Dissatisfaction with current role  | 4 |
| Excessive work levels/hours        | 2 |
| Normal Retirement                  | 1 |
| Not completed - involuntary leaver | 2 |
| Probationary                       | 1 |
| Redundancy                         | 1 |
| Travel                             | 1 |

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# MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS

September 2021

The Forward Plan containing Key Decisions is published 28 days prior to each Cabinet meeting

| Title of report and summary of decision   | Decision Taker                                      | Date of Decision              | Officer contact   | Cabinet Member   | Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s) |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Housing Strategy Consultation Draft</b><br>To consider the draft strategy.             | Homes Policy Development Group                      | 20 Jul 2021                   | Simon Newcombe,<br>Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing<br>Tel: 01884 244615 | Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services<br>(Councillor Bob Evans)               | Open  |
|   | Scrutiny Committee                                  | 16 Aug 2021                   |   |  |   |
|   | Cabinet   | 31 Aug 2021                   |   |  |   |
| <b>Playing Pitch Strategy</b><br>To consider the Playing Pitch Strategy for consultation. | Cabinet   | 31 Aug 2021                   | Tristan Peat,<br>Forward Planning Team Leader   | Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration<br>(Councillor Richard Chesterton) | Open  |
| <b>Draft MDDC Litter Strategy</b><br>To receive the MDDC Litter Strategy                  | Environment Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 7 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021 | Darren Beer,<br>Operations Manager for Street Scene   | Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change<br>(Councillor Colin Slade)        | Open  |

| <b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>  | <b>Decision Taker</b>                               | <b>Date of Decision</b>        | <b>Officer contact</b>                                | <b>Cabinet Member</b>  | <b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b> |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Contracted Out Enforcement Duties</b><br>To receive a report on the options to engage an external contractor for additional littering and dog fouling enforcement duties in the district.          | Environment Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 7 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021  | Darren Beer,<br>Operations Manager for Street Scene   | Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change (Councillor Colin Slade) | Open   |
| <b>Devon and Torbay Waste Strategy Management Plan</b><br>To receive a report which outlines the new draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay following public consultation. | Environment Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 7 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021  | Darren Beer,<br>Operations Manager for Street Scene   | Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change (Councillor Colin Slade) | Open   |
| <b>Information with regard to the possible creation of a Teckal compliant company</b><br>To consider advice surrounding the possibility of creating a new Teckal-compliant company entity.            | Homes Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet       | 14 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021 | Stephen Walford,<br>Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201 | Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)        | Open   |

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| <b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>   | <b>Decision Taker</b>                             | <b>Date of Decision</b>        | <b>Officer contact</b>  | <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | <b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b> |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Town and Parish Charter</b><br>To receive the 3 yearly review of the Town and Parish Charter  | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 21 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021 | Jill May, Director of Business Improvement and Operations Tel: 01884 234381                         | Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)                   | Open   |
| <b>Customer Care Policy</b><br>To receive the 3 yearly review of the Customer Care Policy  | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 21 Sep 2021<br><br>28 Sep 2021 | Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement Tel: 01884 234981 | Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)                   | Open   |
| <b>New Local Plan – Issues consultation paper</b><br>To seek Cabinet approval to publish and consult on an Issues Paper for a new Local Plan for Mid Devon | Cabinet   | 28 Sep 2021                    | Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader  | Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton) | Open   |
| <b>Housing Strategy (final version for approval)</b><br>To consider the Housing Strategy.  | Cabinet   | 26 Oct 2021                    | Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615       | Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)               | Open   |

| <b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>  | <b>Decision Taker</b>                             | <b>Date of Decision</b>            | <b>Officer contact</b>   | <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | <b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Air Quality Action Plan</b><br>To receive the 4 yearly review of the Air Quality Action Plan.  | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | November 2021<br><br>December 2021 | Simon Newcombe,<br>Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615 | Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles) | Open   |
| <b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers</b><br>To receive the annual review of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers   | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | November 2021<br><br>December 2021 | Maria De Leiburne,<br>Operations Manager Legal and Monitoring                                    | Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles) | Open   |
| <b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme &amp; Exceptional Hardship Policy</b><br>To receive the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the updated Exceptional Hardship Policy. | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 16 Nov 2021<br><br>30 Nov 2021     | Dean Emery,<br>Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery                             | Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)                | Open   |
| <b>Strategic Grants and Service Level Agreement</b><br>To receive a report from Grants Working Group on the Strategic Grants and Service Level Agreement          | Community Policy Development Group<br><br>Cabinet | 16 Nov 2021<br><br>30 Nov 2021     | John Bodley-Scott,<br>Economic Development Team Leader   | Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles) | Open   |

| <b>Title of report and<br/>summary of decision</b> | <b>Decision<br/>Taker</b> | <b>Date of<br/>Decision</b> | <b>Officer contact</b> | <b>Cabinet Member</b> | <b>Intention to<br/>consider report in<br/>private session<br/>and the reason(s)</b> |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Programme 2022-2023                                |                           |                             |                        |                       |  |

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## SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2021-2022 -

| Meeting Date                     | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| <b>September 2021</b>            |   |       |                     |          |
|                                  | <b>Recommendations from Planning Enforcement Working Group</b><br>To receive the recommendations from the Planning Enforcement Working Group  |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| 13.09.21                         | <b>Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement</b><br>To receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement of area's within their portfolio  |       |                     |          |
| 13.09.21<br>14.09.21<br>28.09.21 | Information with regard to the possible creation of a Teckal compliant company  |       | Andrew Jarrett      |          |
| 13.09.21                         | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |

| Meeting Date        | Agenda Item  | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|---------------------|--|-------|---------------------|----------|
| <b>October 2021</b> |  |       |                     |          |
| 11.10.21            | <b>Community Safety Partnership</b><br>To receive an update on the Community Safety Partnership activities and new Action Plan which was agreed by the Community Policy Development Group for 2021-2022 and sign off 2020/21 achievements. |       | Simon Newcombe      |          |
| 11.10.21            | <b>Cabinet Member for Finance</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Finance on areas within their portfolio.  |       |                     |          |
| 11.10.21            | <b>Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments</b><br>To receive the Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments   |       | Lisa Lewis          |          |
| 11.10.21            | <b>Update on Customer Experience Working Group Recommendations</b><br>To receive an update on the progress against the Customer Experience Working Group recommendations   |       | Lisa Lewis          |          |



| Meeting Date         | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|----------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 11.10.21             | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>November 2021</b> |   |       |                     |          |
| 8.11.21<br>30.11.21  | <b>3 Rivers Development Ltd Business Plan</b><br>To receive the 3 Rivers Development Ltd Business Plan before it is presented to the Cabinet  |       | Andrew Jarrett      |          |
| 8.11.21              | <b>Police Representative</b><br>To discuss Policing issues with a representative from the Police and Crime Commissioner and senior Police Officers  |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| 8.11.21              | <b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services on areas within their portfolio.   |       |                     |          |

| Meeting Date         | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|----------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 8.11.21              | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>December 2021</b> |   |       |                     |          |
| 13.12.21             | <b>Cabinet Member for Community Well Being</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Community Well Being on areas within their portfolio.   |       |                     |          |
| 13.12.21             | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |

| Meeting Date        | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|---------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| <b>January 2022</b> |   |       |                     |          |
| 17.01.22            | <b>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration on areas within their portfolio. |       |                     |          |
| 17.01.22            | <b>Director of Place</b><br>To receive an overview of the remit from the Director of Place  |       | Director of Place   |          |
| 17.01.22            | <b>Budget</b><br>To consider the initial draft 2022/23 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget.  |       | Andrew Jarrett      |          |
| 17.01.22            | <b>Whistleblowing 6 Month Update</b><br>To receive an update from the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security   |       | Catherine Yandle    |          |

| Meeting Date                     | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 17.01.22                         | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>February 2022</b>             |   |       |                     |          |
| 14.02.22                         | <b>Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services on areas within their portfolio.   |       |                     |          |
| 02.22                            | <b>Establishment 6 Month Update</b><br>To receive an update report from the Group Manager for Human Resources on the Establishment  |       | Matthew Page        |          |
| 25.01.22<br>14.02.22<br>10.03.22 | <b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers</b><br>To receive the annual update of Regulation of Investigatory Powers   |       | Monitoring Officer  |          |

| Meeting Date      | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|-------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 14.02.22          | <b>Update on Menopause Working Group Recommendations</b><br>To receive an update on progress of the Menopause Working Group Recommendations   |       | Matthew Page        |          |
| 14.02.22          | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>March 2022</b> |   |       |                     |          |
| 21.03.22          | <b>Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Climate Change</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Environment on areas within their portfolio.  |       |                     |          |
| 21.03.22          | <b>Update on Recommendations from the Planning Enforcement Working Group</b><br>To receive an update on progress of recommendations of the Planning Enforcement Working Group   |       | Director of Place   |          |

| Meeting Date      | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|-------------------|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 21.03.22          | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>April 2022</b> |   |       |                     |          |
| 19.04.22          | <b>Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement</b><br>To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement on areas within their portfolio.   |       |                     |          |
| 19.04.22          | <b>Update on 3 Rivers Development Ltd Business Plan</b><br>To receive an update on the 3 Rivers Development Ltd Business Plan   |       | Andrew Jarrett      |          |
| 19.04.22          | <b>Chairman's Annual Report</b><br>To receive the Chairman's annual report  |       | Clare Robathan      |          |

| Meeting Date  | Agenda Item   | Theme | Officer Responsible | Comments |
|---|---|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 19.04.22  | <b>Work Plan</b><br>Members are asked to note the current Work Plan for the municipal year.<br><br>Members to have the opportunity to discuss additional items to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee and added to the Work Plan. |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
| <b>Items for further Investigation</b><br>These items are due to come before Scrutiny, timings to be confirmed. |   |       |                     |          |
| Page 127  | <b>Bio-Energy Industry</b><br>To investigate concerns and issues with the Bio-Energy Industry   |       | Clare Robathan      |          |
|   | <b>Work Programming Session</b><br>An informal Work Programming Session to agree items and issues to be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee  |       | Clare Robathan      |          |

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